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REPORT

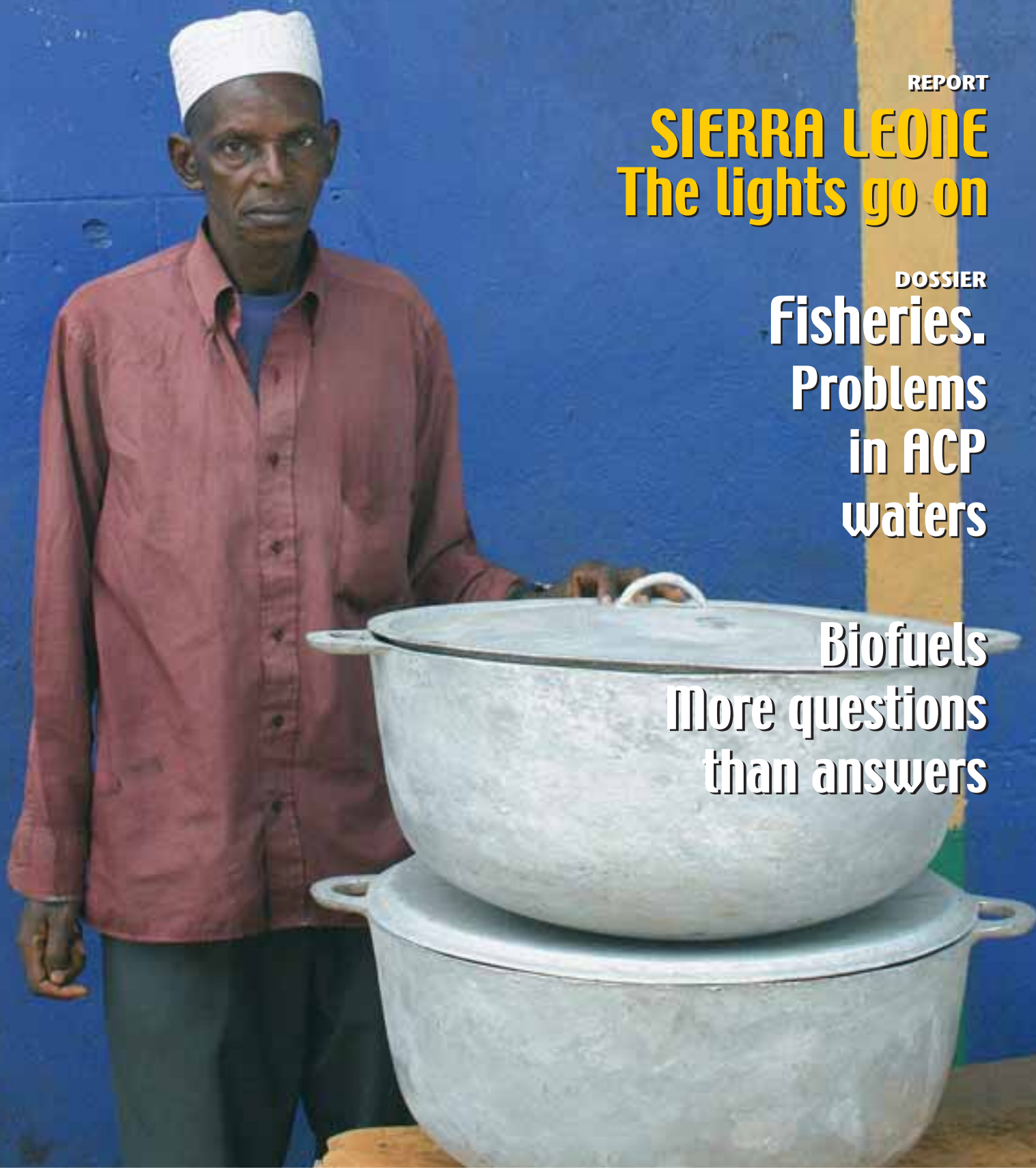
## SIERRA LEONE The lights go on

DOSSIER

## Fisheries. Problems in ACP waters

Biofuels

More questions  
than answers





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**Director and Editor-in-chief**

Hegel Goutier

**Contributors**

Debra Percival

**Editorial Assistant and Production**

Joshua Massarenti

**Contributed in this issue**

Marie-Martine Buckens, Sandra Federici, Gibril Foday-Musa, T. T. Fons, Béatrice Gorez,  
 Gaoussou Gueye, Andrea Marchesini Reggiani, François Misser

**Public Relations and Artistic coordination**

**Public Relations**

Andrea Marchesini Reggiani (Public Relations Manager and Responsible for NGOs' and  
 experts' network)  
 Joan Ruiz Valero (Responsible for Networking with EU and National Institutions)

**Artistic Coordination**

Sandra Federici

**Graphic Conception, Layout**

Orazio Metello Orsini  
 Lucia Gervasio - *arketipa*

**Contract Manager**

Claudia Rechten  
 Tracey D'After



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**Contact**

The Courier  
 45, Rue de Trèves  
 1040 Brussels  
 Belgium (EU)  
 info@acp-eucourier.info  
 www.acp-eucourier.info  
 Tel : +32 2 2374392  
 Fax : +32 2 2801406

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**Publisher responsible**

Hegel Goutier

**Consortium**

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Gulda El Magamba, Sanga divination ceremonies from "Congo Eza", Africalia Editions & Roularta Books. Courtesy of Africalia. Website: www.africalia.be  
 Old fears return: suffering from famine. How many of the forecasters, economists and analysts saw anything coming?

## Old fears return



A deeply-rooted ancestral fear – that of suffering through famine – was awakened by worldwide skirmishes which were quickly dubbed “hunger riots”. Even better-off countries that seemed to have protected themselves against this sort of scourge were affected. As news seeped through, increasingly tense words were used to put across the increasing manifestations of fear: demonstrations in Egypt, riots in Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Côte d’Ivoire, and violent clashes in Haiti.

Watching these events unfold, some may recall that the rich economic blocs were originally created to protect against famine. In the past, the European Union allocated up to two-thirds of its budget to its agricultural policy. This was the price for peace of mind over the fear of hunger that cruelly played on the minds of those who had known such suffering and which was stamped on their collective memory. Others recall that while in the past no country had ever become rich through scrupulous respect for nature, good governance or human rights, the demands placed on poor countries today to meet such expectations are unparalleled.

Today still the major economic powers are the ones that have managed to feed themselves rather than those with exportable raw materials, whether oil or diamonds. This is not simply a matter of good governance. Both China and India are entering the circles of the powerful, but only after firstly becoming more successful at feeding their own populations. And India had already been providing engineers and mathematicians to the world for some time.

Until recently that which had been little cause for concern was quickly shown in its true dimensions: as a global disaster. European Development Commissioner, Louis Michel, who in the past had already expressed his concern, now described this as a “tsunami.” Moreover, the World Food Programme (WFP) already sounded the alarm back in March, a month before the outbreaks.

But how many of the forecasters, economists and analysts saw anything coming, despite the fact that there’s nothing really new to all this in the countries affected? In Haiti, for example, under the first presidency of René Préval in the late 1990s, rice fields vanished. Haiti is a country that was at one time a net exporter of rice. The blame for this was put on irrigation problems, but was above all it was due to the actions of US agro-food giants that sold their rice below the local production price until Haitian farmers were finally forced out of business.

Of course, explanations existed: bad governance, lack of freedom, low quality education and health. While such reasons are all valid, they do not alone suffice. Then there were the advice given to many emerging economies when it seemed that economic development was being held back by rising energy prices. The solution? More biodiesel had to be produced – but it seems that the soya, palm oil or maize used to manufacture the product came at the expense of crops grown for food. Of course, biodiesel initially won over as it commanded a higher price. This is an economic game that can prove extremely dangerous and lead to spiralling food prices. The road to hell really is paved with good intentions. This issue of *The Courier* looks at the dilemma.

We also report on Sierra Leone, a country at the very bottom of the UNDP development rankings. It is today a place of hope: the expansion of electricity in the country coinciding with a new government in office. Although the nation’s agriculture minister is being wooed to produce biofuel from palm oil, he would rather think this through before making a final decision. It would appear he is not ready to let the ‘golden calf’ of energy take the place of staple foodstuffs like rice and cocoa. There is light in such uncertainty.

*Hegel Goutier*  
 Editor-in-chief

Debra Percival

# IN THE DRIVING SEAT OF THE CARIBBEAN 'MACHINERY' MEETING WITH DR RICHARD BERNAL\*

Fourteen members of CARIFORUM\*\* belong to the only regional grouping of ACP nations which have, to date, initialled a fully-fledged European Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU). This is seen as a tribute to the Jamaica-based Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM), set up in 1997 by heads of government of CARICOM – the Guyana-based regional organisation promoting integration of the Caribbean people – to pool resources and coordinate all trade talks with partners. The new CARIFORUM-EU Agreement was to be signed in spring 2008 with 'provisional application' in July. Director-General of the CRNM, economist Dr Richard Bernal, speaks to The Courier.

**T**o what extent is the EPA's successful conclusion due to the CRNM?

The CRNM has had a coordinating role in facilitating the development of regional negotiating positions. Such coordination has included facilitating consultations with stakeholders, research and technical work. The successful conclusion of the EPA is owed therefore in part to the technical labour undertaken by the negotiators and the CRNM, but more importantly to the Member States, which were ultimately responsible for determining the negotiating mandate and guiding the negotiators throughout the process.

'Machinery' implies an onward march, no matter what.

When one gets into one's car, there is a reasonable expectation that the car will start once the key is engaged. Similarly, the expectation of the negotiating 'machinery' is that it too will func-

tion properly and consistently as the nature and scope of CARIFORUM foreign trade policy evolves.

Did you feel rushed into signing up for an EPA?

The implications of the elimination of the non-reciprocal trade preferences under the Cotonou Agreement were very real for our region. The three principal options

Bernal (on the right) signing the EPA agreement with Karl Falkenberg, the Deputy Director General for Trade at the European Commission. To the rear, Kusha Haraksingh, lead negotiator on EPA legal issues with the College of Negotiators. Wayne Lewis



were to resort to the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), to negotiate a new market access arrangement for goods only, or to negotiate a complete EPA.

The region, recognising the market potential in services and investment, decided that a full EPA was its best option. The negotiations were completed on 16 December 2007 not because of external pressure, but rather because the negotiators and the heads were confident that the Agreement was a good one and that the mandate had been achieved.

Is the EPA challenge-proof in the WTO?

In law, successful litigation is generally dependent upon two variables: the interpretation of the law and the credibility of arguments presented by the challenger and by the defence. The WTO is no exception. Therefore, it is possible that challenges to the EPA from WTO membership could arise. Some elements of the rules of the WTO are ambiguous and have not been conclusively tested and interpreted within WTO jurisprudence. This ambiguity facilitates avenues for challenge, especially from competing developed countries and non-ACP developing countries. At the same time, legal ambiguity provides latitude for liberal interpretations and the application of the legal principle.

The whole purpose of entering into negotiations was an arrangement which, in contrast to the Cotonou preferences that required a waiver, would be compatible with the rules of the WTO. We have been careful to negotiate an Agreement that would secure our trading interests but that could survive legal scrutiny.

What are the benefits of the EPA for Caribbean people?

One of the most immediate benefits of the EPA is that it allows CARIFORUM to avoid facing the GSP, which would have been significantly less advantageous than the EPA. Certainly key CARIFORUM industries, such as the banana industry, would have suffered if no EPA was in place because there is no coverage for bananas under the GSP.

Additionally, in the short to medium term, tariff reductions could lead to the depreciation of some prices of goods and services, which may result in savings to the consumer. Falling retail prices would also lower the production costs of CARIFORUM producers whose production processes and inputs are highly dependent upon imports.



Centre: Ambassador Richard Bernal; on his right, Henry Gill, Senior Technical Director of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM); on his left Junior Lodge, the CRNM's senior co-ordinator based in Brussels. © Wayne Lewis

In the long term, the EPA secures CARIFORUM preferential market access to Europe, across both traditional and new sectors in goods and services in a form that is consistent with WTO rules.

What about the tariff revenue losses for ACP governments?

The commitment to liberalise means that both CARIFORUM and Europe will have to remove import duties from certain goods. This will lead to a loss of revenue originating from these tariffs. CARIFORUM is expected to liberalise as much as 80 per cent of all goods imported from Europe. However, the commitment to remove tariffs is not immediate for CARIFORUM. Whereas Europe is expected to immediately remove duties and quota restrictions for all goods except rice and sugar, CARIFORUM is allowed several phasing schedules before it is necessary for products to become completely duty free. For some products, CARIFORUM is allowed to delay liberalisation by 5, 10 or 15 years, and in some other cases up to 25 years. Furthermore, the EPA provides a list of products which will be exempted from liberalisation.

Under a trade agreement like the EPA, it is expected that any revenue losses will be compensated by capitalisation of the market access opportunities available to firms. However, CARIFORUM adjustment to revenue loss caused by liberalisation can be realised further by reforming tax systems with the aim of transitioning away from taxes that impede trade flows to other forms of taxation.

What sort of development aid is needed to underpin the EPA?

Successful implementation of the Agreement within CARIFORUM hinges upon the expres-

sion and implementation of financial and non-financial development support and cooperation.

The EPA's development support measures and priorities are broadly outlined in a chapter on development but are more specifically detailed in individual chapters related to the particular trade subjects under the Agreement. Defining the formulation and implementation of specific development support projects must be preceded by a process of needs assessment. This process of needs assessment, though not complete, started even before the conclusion of the EPA negotiations. The evaluation of the costs of implementation will be determined through this process. It is up to the Member States to determine what these projects will be.

And the monitoring?

Monitoring of the implementation of the EPA is to be facilitated through participatory processes at the national levels of CARIFORUM and Europe. However, the EPA also includes certain institutional provisions. Such provisions include the establishment of the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council, the CARIFORUM-EU Trade and Development Committee and the CARIFORUM-EU Parliamentary Committee. ■

For further information, go to [www.crnmm.org](http://www.crnmm.org) and [www.europa.eu/trade](http://www.europa.eu/trade)

\* CRNM Director-General  
\*\* CARIFORUM is the Caribbean Forum of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, which includes members of the CARICOM regional grouping: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent, Surinam, Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Cuba. The EU initialled an EPA on 16 December 2007 with all CARIFORUM States apart from Cuba.

**Keywords**

Debra Percival; Richard Bernal; CARICOM; EPA; CRNM.

Hegel Goutier

# SLOWLY EMERGING FROM A PROTRACTED CRISIS

*On 13 December, the Solomon Islands' parliament elected a new prime minister, following a motion of no confidence in his predecessor. This time, the democratic rules were respected without any skirmishes, unlike unfortunate events in the country's recent past. Tensions with the nation's powerful neighbour, Australia, quickly eased. There now finally appears to be progress in the long process of exiting the crisis.*

The Solomon Islands' parliament passed on 13 December a motion of no confidence in the government, prompting the resignation of its leader, Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare. A week later, his newly installed successor, Derek Sikua, was warmly welcomed by the international community and, above all, by Australia who agreed to step up cooperation, thus putting an end to the tension that has soured relations between the two countries.

Most importantly, one of the new government leader's first actions was to travel to Malaita to offer his apologies to the local population for "the offences and injustices" perpetrated against them during the recent ethnic conflicts. Disputes between natives of this province and the inhabitants of the island of Guadalcanal were mainly responsible for

plunging the country into a protracted crisis that began in the early 1990s. Derek Sikua's call for a major reconciliation effort was accompanied by a request for negotiations with the Malaita Province executive in order to get major development projects back on track, including the Aulauta palm oil project, long-awaited on the island.

### > The notion of 'wantok'

When *The Courier* visited the Solomon Islands a few months ago, former Prime Minister Sogavare (still in office at the time) strongly emphasised the bitterness of his government's relations with Australia – insinuating that the country was seeking to impose solutions which took no account of the culture and customs of the Solomon Islands.

It is important to understand how the situation in the Solomons has come about: the notion of *wantok* (literally 'one talk'). *Wantok* refers to those who speak the same language and thus of the same clan. This means a duty of solidarity to fellow clan members often up to the boundaries of what's lawful. This notion is deeply rooted in the Melanesian culture of most of the inhabitants of the Solomon Islands. What's more, the dozen or so islands that make up

this country – which only came together as one nation with independence – are inhabited by many different clans, many of whom are historically antagonistic towards one another. About 70 languages are spoken by the country's estimated 540,000 population, with each language totally different from another.

The process of unification only really started during the Second World War, when the region (and Guadalcanal in particular) was the epicentre of one of the most dramatic and decisive clashes between Japanese and US forces. Here the Japanese finally lost the war and it was the huts at the Honiara military airport that formed the basis of the future capital, Honiara. Together with the other islands grouped around Guadalcanal, the state of the Solomon Islands was formed, despite having no real shared history, and was granted independence from the United Kingdom in 1978.

The *wantok* practiced by politicians in positions of power has often been viewed by donor countries as a symbol of bad governance, which helps to explain some misunderstandings, if not serious tensions.

### > Repeated troubles

Tensions between the Malaitans and the population of Guadalcanal quickly marked the short history of the new state. To put this into context, the population density on Malaita is relatively high but economic opportunities are relatively low compared to neighbouring Guadalcanal, which is the seat of political power and where a large part of the Malaita population emigrated.

The first major troubles date back to the late 1990s and originate in conflicts between the inhabitants of Malaita who had settled in the province of Guadalcanal and the local indigenous population. The Gwale people of Guadalcanal, the most prosperous of the Solomon Islands, started to protest strongly at what they considered to be an invasion by people from other islands (especially Malaita), accusing them not only of stealing their land but also their jobs. Paramilitary groups were formed. The first of these was the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA) which intimidated the Malaitan 'immigrants', forcing them to flee the rural areas in their thousands, to either the capital or their place of origin. In response to the intimidation by this group of extreme nationalists the Malaitan Eagle Force created in June 2000, staged what amounted to a coup d'état when they seized the prime minister. This in turn gave rise to a new Gwale paramilitary group, the Isatabu Freedom Fighters (replacing the GRA), who assassinated a member of the new government. The resulting violence in the country cost hundreds of lives.

Two successive peace agreements between the warring parties produced no lasting solutions and in April 2000 further conflict erupted in the Western Province. The background to this latest crisis was the unsustainable exploitation of the forests by foreign (principally Asian) companies who – in addition to their impact on the environment, the economy and good governance – also affected the country's culture and customs. On several of the region's islands (including Guadalcanal) land ownership is traditionally handed down among the women of the family. The logging companies were however accused of conducting irregular transactions with some of the village officials and dispossessing women. This sparked a series of mass demonstrations by the female population, who were also reportedly the victims of violence at the hands of private security guards employed on some of the plantations. Explaining the situation to *The Courier*, Ella Kauhue, Secretary General of the National Council of Women, noted



National Museum and cultural Center, Honiara. © Hegel Goutier



Guadalcanal Memorial. © Hegel Goutier



Smoke in the bush, near Honiara. © Hegel Goutier. The background to the latest crisis was the unsustainable exploitation of the forest

Parliament, Honiara. © Hegel Goutier  
The recent political leadership crisis has demonstrated the strength of our fundamental democratic institution, says PM Derek Sikua

© South Pacific Tourism organisation



that "in Guadalcanal for instance, there is matrilineal rule. Women own the land. But often, when they allow foreigners to come, women don't participate in the decision, so the men receive huge amounts of money. They travel, spend the money and then go back to the village."

In April 2003, the Pacific Island States decided, within the framework of the Biketawa Declaration, to send a policing mission to the Solomon Islands – RAMSI (Regional Assistance to the Solomon Islands) – under the command of Australia who supplied 80 per cent of the manpower, with units from New Zealand and other Pacific islands also contributing and Australia funding the units from Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

RAMSI managed to restore order, despite sporadic troubles. However, after elections that passed off relatively peacefully in 2006, the prime minister – elected with a large majority based on the country's three principal parties – was forced to resign following several days of rioting. Accusations of links with corruption were levelled against the prime minister. Particular anger was directed at Asian businesses active in forest management, particularly the Taiwanese. During these riots Honiara's Chinatown among other places, was destroyed.

A new prime minister, Manasseh Sogavare (who was still in office when *The Courier* visited) seemed to meet with the rioter's approval and was elected. However, his relations with some sections of the international community (particularly Australia) were very strained. The main reason for this was his appointment to government of two figures who were accused of involvement in organising the riots. The European Union disapproval came in a statement published in May 2006. Under internation-



al pressure, these appointments were finally overturned but relations with Australia remained acrimonious due to other contested appointments. Mr Sogavare had previously been prime minister in the wake of a coup d'etat in 2000 until December 2001.

On 13 December, a no-confidence vote in parliament forced Sogavare to resign and on 20 December he was replaced by Derek Sikua. Sogavare is now opposition leader. Rarely since the 1999 crisis has a change of government been so peaceful and violence-free in both the towns and surrounding countryside. For the new prime minister and his government, this is a sign that the democratic institutions have gained in strength: "the recent political leadership crisis has demonstrated the strength of our fundamental democratic institutions to ensure a just and democratic outcome."

Indeed, since the arrival of the RAMSI forces, the rules of democracy have been respected but often in a volatile atmosphere and fairly serious unrest. This does not bode well for a total resolution of the crisis and the eventual departure of the RAMSI forces. Nevertheless, many people saw the applause of the crowds on Malaita for the new prime minister as a sign of the beginning of genuine national reconciliation. It is to be hoped that the present détente is not followed by further prevarication and hiccups on the road to democracy. ■

1 The Biketawa Declaration, adopted in October 2000 by the Pacific Islands Forum, laid the basis for a coordinated response to regional crises.

Keywords

Solomon Islands; Pacific; forestry; governance; Sogavare; Derek Sikua.



Petrol station in the Chinese quarter, Honiara. © Hegel Goutier  
Particular anger was directed at Asian Business. During the riots, Honiara's Chinatown was destroyed



Out at sea from Honiara. © Hegel Goutier

# EU Member State aid cuts threaten **POVERTY** pledges

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, has called on EU Member States to up their respective Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) if the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are to be met. They include halving extreme global poverty by 2015. Barroso told a Brussels press conference 9 April: "We are doing well on aid effectiveness but we have to be honest and admit that our 2007 aid volume performance is simply not good enough."

The call for more aid is contained in part an EU paper, 'EU as a global partner for development' released by Barroso 9 April to get talks started on a common EU position for the High Level Forum of Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana in September and the Doha Financing for Development Conference in December.

For the first time since 2000 the combined overseas aid from 27 EU Member States to all developing nations fell to €46.1 billion in 2007 compared with €47.7 billion in 2006. Recent figures from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reveal that aid fell in 2007 from the following states who are traditionally large contributors by volume: Belgium (-11.2 per cent),

France (-15.9 per cent), Italy (-3.6 per cent), Portugal (-9.4 per cent), Sweden (-2.6 per cent) and the United Kingdom (-29.1 per cent).

The following states gave more in 2007: Germany (+5.9 per cent), Ireland (+4.6 per cent), Luxembourg (+11.7 per cent), Spain (+33.8 per cent), Austria (+7.6 per cent), Denmark (+2.9 per cent), Finland (+5.5 per cent), Greece (+5.3 per cent) and the Netherlands (+3.1 per cent).

President Barroso said the European Commission had a leadership role in meeting the MDGs and asked Member States to specify annual development spending up to 2015. This message would be taken to the June meeting of EU Heads of State in Slovenia and the group of eight most industrialised nations (G8) in July in Japan, he said.

Member States were also asked to contribute to a new annual European Commission annual budget line of €2 billion for 'Aid for Trade' up to 2010, half of which will come from the Commission and the rest from EU Member States. It will finance such as infrastructure to boost regional trade in developing nations and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states are expected to be big beneficiaries.

Larger amounts of aid are just one part of the 'global partner' paper which also stresses improved aid effectiveness. Here a lot of progress had been made with EU Member States taking joint planning decisions, Louis Michel, EU Commissioner for Development, told journalists on 9 April. In Somalia six EU countries and Norway coordinate aid. Michel also gave his backing to budget support which created, "a relationship of confidence between equals." Forty-seven per cent of the €22.6 billion 10th EDF (2008-2013) is earmarked for budget aid in ACP nations.

And the paper urges more synergy between development and other EU policies to avoid situations where they are at odds with each other, a case in point being biofuels. (See article on biofuels in trade rubric). D.P. ■

Keywords

Debra Percival; MDGs; Aid; José Manuel Barroso; Louis Michel.

A young girl learning the Koran in Freetown, 12 August 2004. © IRIN

## GEEREF AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

GEEREF stands for the Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund. It is a new EU fund set up for small-scale projects that improve energy efficiency or promote renewable energy in developing countries and economies in transition, reducing climate change. The EU Commission is to put in €80M over the next four years to kick-start the fund and trigger private investment. Projects using environmentally sound technology that has a proven track record will be given priority. ACP nationals are eligible. D.P. ■

Climate Action logo. © EC



# Dossier

## FISHING, in search of a sustainable model

by Marie-Martine Buckens

The fishing sector in the coastal states of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific is going through turbulent times and facing multiple challenges. These include whether to include the sector in the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), putting in place adequate structures to ensure sustainable fishing by both local and foreign fleets (particularly European fleets), and the viability of local fisheries – vital in coastal countries such as Senegal, Mauritania and several Caribbean countries.

As a backdrop to this there is the new proposal put forward by the European Commission in October 2007 to combat illegal fishing – an epidemic of such proportions that it has now become an international priority. Indeed, the challenges are so great that we decided in this dossier to focus on three pressing issues: the battle against illegal fishing, the exemplary partnership agreement on fishing between the EU and Mauritania, and local fishing activities. ■



Fish drying racks in Cap Skirring,  
Casamance, Senegal © EU Delegation Senegal

# Open warfare on “illegal, undeclared, unregulated” fishing

*The EU has decided to attack a crisis head-on that could affect almost a fifth of the global volume of fishing: illegal practices. This initiative is headed by Cesar Deben Alfonso, Director of monitoring and implementation at the Directorate-General of Fishing and Maritime Affairs at the European Commission.*

“F or the ACP countries – and our relations with them – the issue of illegal fishing is of great importance,” explains Cesar Deben. He continues, “...in as much as we are seeing an increase in this type of fishing and Europe plays a major role in the fact that we are the biggest growth market (even with the emergence of Russia and China) for quality products.”

The EU is a big player in the international fish product industry. In 2003, the quantity imported by the then 25 Member States was more

than 10 million tonnes totalling some €24 billion. In the same year, the EU exported just 6 million tonnes of fish products – a total value of around €14 billion. The EU is, hence, a net importer of these products and this is a growing trend. This is why, over a period of time, the EU has concluded fishing agreements with various ACP coastal states.

They include mixed agreements (permitting different species to be caught), in particular with West African States close to European coastlines (especially the Spanish coast), and tuna fishing agreements with Indian Ocean countries (primarily the Seychelles and the Comoros) and

Inspectors arrive to control a fishing boat, 2002. © ec





Another inspection on a fishing vessel, 2002. © EC

countries of the Pacific Ocean (the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and the federated states of Micronesia), which is one of the regions rich in migratory species.

Above all, these agreements aim to ensure regular stocks for the European fleet. However, the international market in fish products has grown to such a size that ever-increasing numbers of pirates roam the seas, lured by the lucrative profits to be made by those who don't observe the rules (fishing methods and quotas) which are imposed on legal boats.

> **An enormous task**

"There are three reasons why we are tackling this enormous task," says Cesar Deben. "First of all, it's about preserving a resource. Secondly, the rules that we put on the table in October 2007 offer a framework of cooperation, particularly with ACP countries, as they are the primary victims since they lack the structural capability to confront this threat and deal with corruption. Therefore we must bear in mind that controlling fishing activity involves huge costs that many countries are unable to meet. Thirdly, we want to put European fleets on an equal footing with third-country fleets." He continues, "Our fleets are the most regulated in the world and they must be allowed to operate under conditions of fair competition."

The toughness of the regulation is illustrated by the requirement for EU boats to carry a 'blue box' on board (so they can be located by satellite) and an electronic logbook, to be in general use from 2009.

However, Cesar Deben recognises that illegal fishing affects all fleets, whether in the form of companies created in third countries or the use of certain flags of convenience.

> **Restrictive measures**

To date, the EU has backed the adoption of various measures of regional fishing organisations to combat illegal fishing, but this is the first time that legally binding measures (in the form of EU Council rulings) can be adopted by European Fisheries Ministers. So, what are they? The first is aimed at attacking the status of flags of convenience.

Notes Deben: "The Maritime Law states that countries are responsible for the activities of ships that sail under their flags and we have to ensure that this obligation is fully upheld."

Happily, says Deben, cases are becoming rarer as countries like Equatorial Guinea, the Dominican Republic, Belize and Panama abandon the practice. "But there are still many others." He adds, "We want to deal with this on two fronts. Firstly to compel states to strengthen their controls – if they don't cooperate we will not accept their products at European ports. Then we want to change the legal framework by reversing the burden of proof, so that boats wishing to export to Europe must prove that their catches are legal – normal practice in the United States. To make this possible, the rules provide for a certification mechanism, which already exists for tuna fishing, and countries that don't cooperate could be 'decertified'."

So, it will not be a case of drawing up a blacklist of pirate boats, but rather of withdrawing an automatic right. "There are already adequate rules, adding a legal requirement suffices," says Deben.

> **Accompanying measures**

"The mechanisms to make this work," continues Cesar Deben, "must also respect World

Trade Organisation rules, and must not have negative repercussions for developing country exporters. The main ACP exporters of fish products to Europe are South Africa and Namibia, followed by various West African countries, specifically Mauritania. On that basis it is estimated that 80 per cent of fish products stay in Africa as frozen products."

Many of these exporting countries are also the main victims of illegal fishing and the Asian fleets that fish without a licence in their waters have become a real scourge. The EU is now drawing up financial incentives to help countries maintain legal fishing activities. Financial aid is included in the Partnership Agreements drawn up between the EU and some ACP states (destined, admittedly, to become fewer in number).

Suggests Deben: "We can expect long delays while waiting for countries to fall in line just like with the accompanying measures, especially in the training of customs officers." These measures could be funded by the European Development Fund (EDF) or the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

"Overall these proposals have been well received, both by NGOs and the European Parliament, as well as the European Economic and Social Committee," concludes Cesar Deben. And not just by the Europeans, but also by the EU's prime competitors in the sector, notably Norway, the United States and China. Even the Chinese seem willing to cooperate – an important factor since the rules envisage the creation of an international network.

**M.M.B. ■**

**Keywords**  
 Marie-Martine Buckens; illegal fishing; Cesar Deben; European Commission; ACP; WTO; European fleet.

# New Partnership AGREEMENTS

*The EU's former 'fish, pay and go' policy for bilateral fishing agreements with ACP countries is no more. It has been replaced by Fishing Partnership Agreements (FPA) focused on sustainable development.*

**T**he introduction of these FPAs is for both commercial and ecological reasons. The new generation of agreements addresses the ongoing over-exploitation of resources. According to the European Commission, new World Trade Organisation (WTO) regulations on aid to the fishing industry do not mean that the, "EU's financial contribution should be considered as a subsidy for European fishermen." It goes on to say that "... in future, the EU's financial contribution will have to be regarded as an

investment to ensure responsible fishing and therefore be based on new considerations". This transformation of fishing agreements into Fishing Partnership Agreements is a recent development – most of the FPAs have only been in place for a year.

But some things haven't changed. The main aim of the FPAs, as with the former previous bilateral agreements, is to provide European fleets with access to the territorial waters of certain coastal states. In the 1970s most



Tuna are amongst fish stocks in the waters of ACP coastal states of interest to EU fleets. © Chrissie Shepherd. Image from BigstockPhoto.com

coastal states established exclusive economic zones, extending their jurisdiction at sea from a distance of between 3 and 12 nautical miles to 200 nautical miles. This move put almost 90 per cent of the world's fish stocks under the control of these coastal states. As a result, the fishing fleets of the EU Member States, which traditionally operated in the waters of third countries, suddenly found themselves excluded from these areas. To solve this issue, the EU signed fishing agreements with the third countries involved to ensure access for its fleets. In addition, ever since Spain and Portugal joined the EU in 1986, their national bilateral agreements have gradually been replaced by the EU agreements. However, national bilateral agreements are still in place where the EU does not have fishing agreements, for example with South Africa.

> **Ensuring access**

According to the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the EU's policy on fishing in third countries – aimed at protecting the EU's interests in the fishing sector – has been the driving force in



Octopus © Lauri Dammert. Image from BigstockPhoto.com





An industrial fishing vessel  
© iStockphoto.com/rramirez125

- €86M for the EU-Mauritania agreement;
- €7.2M for the EU-Guinea-Bissau agreement;
- €4.12M for the EU-Seychelles agreement;
- €3.9M for the EU-Guinea agreement.

Fish stocks in the waters of the ACP coastal states of interest to the EU fleets can be divided into three main categories:

- Demersal species: mainly octopus, sole, prawns, snapper, hake;
- Small pelagic species: sardinellas, horse mackerel/scads, sardines, pilchards;
- All tuna species.

> **The FPAs: root of all evil?**

Some observers believe that the new Fishing Partnership Agreements the EU is currently negotiating with ACP coastal countries (to replace bilateral agreements) will be the “root of all evil” and will only further encourage illegal fishing. The CTA disagrees, highlighting the example of Spanish trawlers fishing in South African waters with the approval of the South African Marine and Coastal Management (MCM), who get around the reduction in the quantities of hake fished (required by current quotas) by processing the hake into sausage. The CTA points out that, “in the case of South Africa, the absence of a fishing agreement has not prevented some European ship owners from accessing South African fishing waters”. They conclude that, “Private agreements often result in situations that are neither beneficial to the local populations in the ACP nor to levels of fish stocks.” **M.M.B. ■**

**Keywords**

Marie-Martine Buckens; Fishing Partnership Agreements (FPA); ACP; European fleet; overfishing; CTA.

Port of Kalaban Koro, near Bamako, Mali. © Anne-Sophie Costenoble Courtesy of the photographer. Contact: costi@skynet.be

ACP-EU relations in the fishing industry. The EU concluded 14 fishing agreements with ACP countries in July 2007 involving the payment of financial compensation. In return, the EU fleets obtained access to resources that, in theory, are not used by the coastal state concerned and are often referred to as ‘surplus resources’.

> **Primarily Spanish interests**

A study carried out in 2005 by the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID) gave the main reasons for the EU signing fishing agreements as:

- to supply the EU’s fish processing industry with raw materials. This took into account the huge demand on the EU market and the poor supply in EU waters mainly caused by overfishing. Currently, the EU has to import about 60 per cent of the fish it consumes and since 2000 has had to import an additional 9 million tonnes of fish annually to meet the demand of the fish processing industry and

EU consumers. The added value created by the ACP-EU agreements through the processing and sale of fish in the Member States is estimated at €694 million.

- to maintain fishing capacity outside EU waters. In the 1990s, the ACP-EU fishing agreements authorised 800 EU vessels to fish in the waters of developing countries. This fishing, created through the ACP-EU agreements, has increased over the years for technological reasons.
- to protect employment in the EU. Some 35,000 jobs depend on the ACP-EU fishing agreements, mainly in the EU’s fish processing industry.

The Spanish are the main beneficiaries of the agreements between the ACP countries and the EU, with more than 80 per cent of the added value and the employment. Additionally, France and Portugal receive about 7 per cent. In 2006, the total budget of the fishing agreements was €240M and expenditure in 2006 on the main ACP-EU fishing agreements was:



# The controversial example of MAURITANIA

*Providing access to resources and ensuring sustainable development at the same time can sometimes prove impossible. This has been highlighted by the difficulties encountered in implementing the partnership agreement between the EU and Mauritania.*

In December 2007, the European Commission revoked the agreement between the EU and Mauritania, as “EU ship owners were not making full use of the opportunities for fishing.” A series of technical meetings have since been planned to ensure the new agreement is, in the words of the Commission, “more in line with the size of the EU fishing fleet in Mauritanian waters and better meets Mauritania’s requirements with regard to the development of its national fishing sector.” On 19 February this year, EU fisheries ministers gave their backing to the Commission to determine “fishing opportunities for EU vessels in such a way as to ensure a balance between these quotas and the financial reimbursement to Mauritania.” In short, this meant reviewing the EU’s financial contribution to allow its fleets to fish in Mauritanian waters. The EU Council of Ministers also indicated that the two parties should engage in

“consultation to ensure the adoption of measures aimed at sustainable management of Mauritanian marine resources, taking into account the best scientific opinion available in particular over the state of fish stocks.” The initial Fishing Partnership Agreement (FPA) between the EU and Mauritania was drawn up in 1987. The latest agreement was concluded for the period 2006-2012. The protocol establishing fishing opportunities and financial reimbursement was signed for a period of two years and entered into force on 1 August 2006. At the end of the first year of this agreement, the European Commission indicated that the fishing opportunities granted to the Member States were insufficient.

The EU-Mauritania Fishing Partnership Agreement is designed to set an example. It is the most important fishing agreement that the European



Boats off the Mauritanian coast.  
© EU Delegation

Union has ever concluded with a third country – not least in financial terms, as the EU's contribution is €86 million a year, or around a third of Mauritania's national income. In return, about 200 vessels from Spain, Italy, Portugal, France, Greece, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Latvia currently have the right to fish in Mauritanian waters. But the FPA should also set a precedent in attempts to control the key issue of the overexploitation of resources (the present agreement provides the right to fish for crustaceans, prawns, hake and other demersal species, as well as small pelagic species, tuna and cephalopods).

### ► The spectrum of overexploitation

In December 2007, 20 fishing boats from the Spanish Association of Cephalopod Fishing (ANACEF), fishing cephalopods under the current EU-Mauritania agreement, decided to stop their operations owing to losses. According to the association, this was because of inappropriate technical measures written into the agreement. The ANACEF specifically highlighted the minimum size set for catches of cephalopods (500g), which it considers too high and says forced it to fish outside the six-mile limit. It has now been involved in a battle with the Mauritanian authorities for several months to obtain the right to fish for sizes that are prohibited commercially. The Spanish also complain that they have been prevented access to young cephalopods unless they pay heavy compensation. According to ANACEF, the Spanish boats returning home will mean the direct loss of 340 jobs and a further 1,600 indirect job losses. Furthermore, supplies will be disrupted to the Spanish, Italian and Japanese markets that will be deprived of the seven tonnes of cephalopods usually brought back from Mauritania by these boats (a tonne of octopus can fetch US\$7,000-8,000). However, mindful of the concern of over-fishing, the scientific committee of the Mauritanian Ocean and Fisheries Research Institute (IMROP) launched a campaign several months ago designed to protect the regeneration of cephalopods.

Currently, all the fleets working in Mauritanian waters, both local and foreign, are continually recording losses due to the overexploitation of cephalopods. Therefore the main aim of the agreement, according to the



Traditional fishing in Mauritania.  
© EU Delegation Mauritania

The EU-Mauritania Fishing Partnership Agreement is designed to set an example. It is the most important fishing agreement that the European Union has ever concluded with a third country – not least in financial terms, as the EU's contribution is €86 million a year, or around a third of Mauritania's national income.  
© EU Delegation Mauritania



# New agreement with Côte d'Ivoire

On 20 February 2008, the EU Council of Ministers gave the go-ahead for a new fishing partnership with Côte d'Ivoire. This agreement, considerably less sizeable than that between the EU and Mauritania, stipulates an annual financial contribution from the EU of €455,000. The fishing quotas established by this agreement, for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2013 (with retroactive effect), will be divided between the Member States as follows:

- 25 seiners: Spain (15 vessels) and France (10 vessels);
- 15 surface long liners: Spain (10 vessels) and Portugal (5 vessels).

The financial contribution made by the EU corresponds to a reference tonnage of 7,000 tonnes per year and an annual sum of €140,000 to assist with the implementation of the Ivorian government's fishing policy. The new agreement aims to replace the one concluded in 1990 on fishing off Côte d'Ivoire. The agreement also contains a revision clause which allows for amendments to the agreement after three years if necessary. ■

Belgian Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), should be to help Mauritania adjust its fishing capacity to the resources available, maintaining the principle that the European fleets can only have access to the surplus resources that cannot be fished locally. The centre also says that it is vital for the EU to continue its efforts to help Mauritania establish a sustainable development policy for the fishery sector.

### ► The importance of cephalopods

Cephalopods, and octopus in particular, are one of Mauritania's major fishing resources. The Mauritanian Fish Marketing Company (SMCP), which sells all of the frozen demersal species and cephalopods brought in by the national fleet, exported 40,000 tonnes of fish worth almost €119M in 2004. Octopus, which alone accounts for 51.2 per cent of this total export tonnage (with a value of almost €98M), makes up 82 per cent of SMCP's turnover. Moreover, the Mauritanian octopus is equally important for the European fishing industry.

In 2004, the European cephalopod trawlers comprised 33 per cent of the turnover generated within the framework of the fishing agreement (compared to 38 per cent for small pelagic species and 16 per cent for prawn trawlers).

### ► The arrival of the Chinese

Since the beginning of the 1990s when fishing for octopus began its sharp growth, there has also been a huge influx of Chinese vessels into the local fleet as part of its modernisation programme, despite the warnings of CNROP and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) about fish stocks being unable to withstand such

pressure. The arrival of the EU cephalopod trawlers between 1994 and 1996 further accelerated the depletion of stocks and the subsequent decline in landings. Béatrice Gorez, spokesperson for CAPE, a non-governmental organisation campaigning for fair fishing agreements, explained that in 2006 the 125 vessels in the national fleet were mainly of Chinese origin.

In 2006, IMROP, which every four years brings together the leading international experts on Mauritanian fishing, estimated a 31 per cent excess the fishing of octopus, which means a decrease in production of 20 per cent. To achieve the goal of maximising income established by the Mauritanian policy, it would be necessary to reduce the fishing effort by 40 per cent to return it to the maximum economic level.

According to CAPE, 43 licences for fishing octopus are assigned to European trawlers under the access provided by the current Mauritania-EU agreement. Compared with the previous agreement, the most recent figures available show that only 46 of the 55 licences provided for by the 2001-2006 agreement were used during the first quarter of 2005 due to a lack of resources. According to CAPE, the 46 licences are set to fall to 43, representing a decrease of 6.5 per cent. It is difficult to understand how this modest decline adds up to the fall of 30 per cent in the European fishing effort, which is what has been officially announced. M.M.B. ■

#### Keywords

Marie-Martine Buckens; Mauritania; APP; ANACEF; China; cephalopods; CAPE.



Wall painting of CAPE, Alex's beach, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2008. © Debra Percival

Béatrice Gorez\*

# ACP small-scale fishing: THE MOST EFFECTIVE for the new millennium

Overall, small-scale – or traditional fishing – provides over 80 per cent of direct and indirect jobs in the sector. Small-scale fishing in the ACP countries is also vital to the traditional processing activities that ensure a supply of fish to local and regional markets. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, FAO statistics show that small-scale fishing accounts for up to 80 per cent of the fish landed for direct human consumption. In West Africa, small-scale fishing also plays an important role in the

growth of fresh fish supplies to lucrative international markets, such as Europe, the United States and Asia.

In 2006, at a meeting of European shipowners where they looked at how they could contribute to the sustainable development of ACP countries, Mozambique's fisheries minister spoke of the need for Europe to "better understand the problems facing countries when they seek to manage their fisheries in a sustainable manner." He continued: "The principal struggle is the struggle against total poverty and the fishing sector has a major role to play in this struggle." He ended by stressing that, "in this respect, our principal objective is the integrated development of small-scale fishing."

The fact that small-scale fishing is an effective tool in combating poverty is confirmed by all the coastal ACP states. Far from the bleak image conveyed by some, small-scale fishing is a dynamic sector engendering innovation and, with the right focus and support, can be a main player in meeting the challenges of the new millennium.

One of the major challenges for ACP countries is to restore fragile ecosystems and fish stocks depleted by intensive and harmful fishing methods. Given fish shortages, ACP fishermen must now commit to qualitative rather than quantitative fishing, prioritising methods that respect

both the marine environment and product quality. A clear link between product quality and the catches of traditional fishing fleets has already been established. In Mauritania, for example, the superiority of small-scale fishing in terms of the quality and adding value to a product is a constant factor. In 2005, octopus caught using traditional Mauritanian fishing vessels sold for US\$200 more per tonne than that caught by refrigerated trawlers. As for the noble seabed species, only the product of small-scale fishing provides the quality for export to Europe, reaching an average price of €4.5 per kg. The frozen fish – produced by the industrial fishing chain – sells at under €2 per kg.

Giving priority to investment in small and medium-sized businesses in the ACP small-scale fishing sector – as well as the service sectors and infrastructure (ports, access to processing sites and use of appropriate technologies) – enables this industry to maximise its full potential in both combating poverty and ensuring food safety. This should be at the heart of measures governing EU involvement in the ACP fishing sector. ■

\* Coordinator, Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA)

**Keywords**

Key words: traditional fishing; Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements (CFFA); Béatrice Gorez.

## The notion of 'added value'

It is often wrong to speak of 'added value' in the fish processing business. In many cases, processing does not really add any value to the product at all. The opposite is often the case, in that fish quickly lose their value once they leave the water. So, to optimise the value of catches, the product must be kept alive and fresh for as long as possible. ■

Gaoussou Gueye\*

# Local fishing in Senegal: QUALITY AND TRACEABILITY challenges\*\*

Local fishing in Senegal consists of 12,000 pirogues (small, flat-bottomed boats), 60,000 fishermen and as many jobs again indirectly linked to local fishing communities where women are working in processing, fish-related activities and as wholesale fish merchants. Local fishing in Senegal is also the main source of fish products for international, regional, and local markets. Therefore improvement in the traceability and the quality (especially cleanliness) of our products is of major importance to the industry.



Traditional boats in Djifer, a fishing village in southern Senegal. © EU Delegation Senegal

Quality assurance begins at sea from the moment the fish leave the water, which is why we must work to improve the quality of our fleet. So now local fishermen take a positive view on the gradual replacement of the traditional wooden pirogue with fibreglass versions. And this change could turn out to be a positive move, as our country is now facing deforestation and it requires two large trees to make one wooden pirogue. More than that, wooden pirogues require frequent and costly maintenance – they need to be repaired every six months.

The new, fibreglass pirogues are also cleaner and lighter than the traditional boats, are better equipped for storing and preserving fish, and are easier to maintain. They also use less fuel, something to bear in mind at a time when fuel costs are an increasing burden on our livelihoods.

### > Modern boats and hygiene

But replacing wooden pirogues with fibreglass is expensive for the fishermen, given that a fibreglass pirogue costs more than twice as much as a wooden one. Therefore, to ensure the gradual renewal of our fleet, and make sure that this option is not only available to those who can afford boats, specific aid or credit mechanisms must be available.

However, replacing wooden pirogues with fibreglass ones will not solve the cleanliness issue if the local fishing industry does nothing about changing its methods for handling fish. Today, most of the people handling fish on the boats, as well as the many women involved in the industry (including those on the landing quays), are not well enough informed about the requirements for traceability and cleanliness, and what that means in terms of changing their daily working habits. To meet these require-

ments, information and training are needed.

Many of the people involved in the industry have no command of French; however the majority are perfectly competent in their national language, both written and spoken. It should therefore be possible to draw up procedures in their national language to allow people in the industry to complete the necessary documents and provide accurate information. In fact, the 'point of first sale' (the landing quays) is the perfect location for bringing together all the elements required to improving traceability of fish catches.

### > The vital role played by the consumer

We can already see significant changes that have taken place in both the professionalism and the specialisation of people with responsibility for traceability and cleanliness. For example, the polystyrene boxes for storing the fish on board the boats are no longer cleaned by the fishermen themselves, but by men and women who specialise in this work and have acquired the skills to ensure a high level of cleanliness.

Similarly, drivers of refrigerated trucks (who transport the fish from the landing quays to Dakar) are now members of an association and have undergone training in transporting fish in the best way possible. This involves, amongst other things, individual approval ratings in recognition of their specialisation.

There is an enormous task ahead, particularly in the improvement of working and handling conditions for locally processed products that are sold throughout the sub-region. And the problems are numerous: cleanliness and hygiene at processing sites; the efforts required by local authorities to collect rubbish regularly; the provision of drainage and drinking water at these

sites; issues concerning the packing of the merchandise and so on.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the responsibilities of consumers and the need to educate them about sustainable fishing, as well as the need to combat illegal fishing.

On the one hand, consumers want a good quality, wholesome product. On the other hand, they are still not interested in knowing whether the product is legally caught or not. For example, the consumer wants a 300g fish on their plate even though the law stipulates that in order to preserve stocks the minimum permitted size is 400g. The fisherman will then do his utmost to meet consumer demand, even if this means breaking the law and forging the required traceability documents.

It is also the case that many hotels demand young, small fish, especially with species such as white grouper, sea bream, prawns, etc., even if this goes against the Senegalese Code of Fishing. But this is also the case in Spain, where, during our visit to the market in Barcelona, we saw young fish of species from our regions on sale.

That is why consumers and customers – including hotels – must be informed and made aware of their responsibilities in relation to their demand for fish products. These should fall in line with the laws and regulations linked to conservation. ■

\* Vice President of the Inter-professional National Council for Local Fishing in Senegal (CONIPAS). E-mail: gaoussoug@yahoo.fr

\*\* Presentation made at the Fishing Products Summit organised by the Seafood Choices Alliance, from 27-30 January 2008 in Barcelona (Spain).

#### Keywords

traditional fishing; Senegal; pirogue; CONIPAS; traceability.



Traditional fishing boats on a beach in Senegal. © EU Delegation Senegal



François Misser, Hegel Goutier and Andrea Marchesini

# FIGUREHEADS of ACP-EU cooperation

*As much as being measured by results, cooperation is the outcome of democratic debate. However, results of those debates are all down to one thing, individual men and women. While it may not be possible to name every last individual involved over the years in ACP-EU cooperation, here the Courier attempts to showcase a gallery of some of the leading voices in those discussions and debates.*

Sadly, some key names were indisposed or could not be reached while others like Lorenzo Natali (European Commissioner from 1985 to 1989), Tiéoulé Mamadou Konaté (the first Secretary-General of the ACP Group, 1975-1980), and Isabelle Bassong (Cameroon's Ambassador to the European institutions from 1988 to 2006), are no longer with us.

As you can imagine, the list of people who have played either an ad hoc role or a key part throughout the years is a very long one and all the Courier can do is offer an overview. So let's begin by naming one of the founders: the legendary head of protocol and head of the press office for the ACP Group, Alpha Niaka Bary. Senegalese, Niaka Bary was famed both for his speed at solving a whole host of problems as well as for his amazing collection of walking sticks! His fellow countryman, Seydina Oumar Sy, former Ambassador and a Minister for Foreign Trade and Affairs, was involved in all the talks on the various Lomé Conventions. From the same era, and heading the ACP negotiating team during the first Lomé Convention, the Nigerian Ambassador, Olu Sanu was noted for his dogged determination.

Royalty had its place too, with the House of Windsor's Princess Anne making her mark on the cooperation process during the September 1985 meeting in Inverness. There she urged the ACP-EEC Joint Assembly to do more than just talk about aid and to make it effective. Leading political figures such as the French Home Affairs Minister, Michel Poniatowski, also made a significant contribution. On the eve of Lomé III, in his role as Chair of the European Parliament's Development Committee, he made a call for a renewal of the cooperation policy.

The architects of Lomé also include Edgar Pisani (European Commissioner for Development, 1981-1984), the father of the political dialogue with the ACP countries: the focus on rural development and food security was a reflection of his earlier experience with France's Ministry of Agriculture. History will also record Lorenzo Natali's appointment as Commissioner for Development in 1985, ending what appeared to be a French monopoly of this post. He was followed by Manuel Marin (1989) of Spain, João de Deus Pinheiro (1994) of Portugal, Poul Nielson (1999) of Denmark and Louis Michel (2004) of Belgium.

## > Dieter Frisch

THE EUROPEAN NEGOTIATOR DURING THE LOMÉ CONVENTIONS



As the European Commission's Director-General for Development from 1983 to 1993, Dieter Frisch, an economic science (Bonn University) and modern languages graduate (Heidelberg university), joined the European enterprise in 1958. After leaving the Commission, Frisch continued to fuel the development debate as one of the founders of Transparency International, alongside with his German compatriot and former World Bank official, Peter Eigen,

that campaigns against major corruption and the detrimental impact this has on development. He claims that one of the key lessons to be drawn from the Lomé Conventions between the European Community (as it was at the time) and the ACP countries was that these were breakthrough pacts that launched a dynamic process leading to later agreements with the Mediterranean, Latin American and Asian countries.

## > Ghebray Berhane

"THE ACP COUNTRIES HAVE TO SEEK ANOTHER ASPIRATION"



Secretary-General of the ACP Group from 1990 to 1995, this Sorbonne doctor of law had 14 years of experience in EU-ACP cooperation as Ethiopia's Ambassador to the European institutions from 1978 to 1987 where he negotiated the Lomé III and Lomé IV Conventions.

And his involvement with development work continues as the head of an Addis Ababa-based

firm offering legal advice and consultancy services. The firm has provided expert knowledge to the Ethiopian Privatization Agency and the Commonwealth Development Corporation, while operating in the field of arbitration on behalf of the World Food Programme and the EU.

Ghebray Berhane believes that while the ACP regions are committed to signing individual economic partnership agreements with the EU, the time is ripe for the ACP countries to find "a new momentum, another aspiration". He says the ACP countries would be well advised to face up to the major challenges that cannot be addressed on a regional basis, such as climate change or the major health issues.

## > Claude Cheysson

FATHER OF LOMÉ AND STABEX



A former Foreign Minister of France (1981 to 1984), Claude Cheysson is one of the architects of the EU's cooperation policy. In his capacity as European Commissioner for Development, he inaugurated the first Lomé Convention (1975), which signalled a radical change in cooperation. One key element was the contractual dimension ensuring that concessions granted could no longer be withdrawn.

A further example was Lomé being regarded as a gamble on the ACP partners' insistence of how their cooperation with the European Union is prioritised. What is more, Lomé I was the first international cooperation agreement to usher in a compensatory finance scheme to stabilise the earnings of the ACP countries from their farm exports to the EU: Stabex. None of these decisions were surprising to a man who, ever since he joined the French diplomatic service at the end of the Second World War, understood the former colonies' desire for independence. An adviser to the Vietnamese President in 1952, Claude Cheysson was also a keen supporter of Algerian independence. And he returned from 1985 to 1988, as European Commissioner for Mediterranean Policy and North-South Relations, to nurture a vibrant Lomé spirit and provide a further proactive push for cooperation with other countries.

## > Edwin Carrington

THE PRAGMATIST



The Tobagian economist Edwin Carrington spent 14 years with the ACP Secretariat, as Assistant Secretary-General (1976-1985) and as Secretary-General (1985-1990). Regarded as one of the experts on the Lomé Convention he was involved in all the negotiations. Later as Secretary-General of Caricom, from 1992 he has been able to keep close track of the evolving cooperation with the EU.

We have no space here to sum up the hours and hours of speeches Edwin Carrington has made on this subject but we should record the call he made (coinciding with the January 1982 issue of the Courier) for "an increasingly realistic assessment of what cooperation has the potential to offer. In a nutshell, the agreements by themselves do not offer any easy solutions to the woes of the ACP countries, even if they provide the sole framework for this type of cooperation. It is up to the ACP countries to discover the areas they can benefit from and as they themselves help to set the priorities they have to be regarded as bearing a responsibility..."

## > Michel Rocard

THE TABOO-BREAKER



Known for his commitment to the campaign against the war in Algeria, and as a supporter of New Caledonia's right to self-determination, Michel Rocard has continued to wage a fight within the Joint Parliamentary Assembly's (JPA) Development Committee and as member of the European Parliament's Development Committee in a bid to lift one or two taboos or barriers that he

believes get in the way of today's reality. These include trafficking in arms, precious stones and human beings being confused, under the heading of "informal" trade, within economies of the ACP countries. Another taboo, he claims, is the "misleading and dangerous idea" that "the key to development in Africa is having its products gain access to markets in the developed countries." This, even though, "two-thirds of African countries have nothing to export and the oil revenue being earmarked for development in the other countries has failed to deliver anything." Rocard also continues to stress the need to protect food agriculture owing to the decline of food self-sufficiency in Africa.

## > Louis Michel

URNS THE SPOTLIGHT ON INFRASTRUCTURE



At the helm of Europe's Development Cooperation policy since 2004, Commissioner Louis Michel, a former Belgian Foreign Minister, has already made his mark on relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partners. First and foremost, under his leadership the European Commission has boosted the level of direct aid to ACP States' budgets to create a greater sense of ownership and a bigger sense of responsibility in administering EU-sponsored development programmes. Moreover, it is under

his guidance and that of his colleague, Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for Trade, that Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are due to be concluded with ACP during 2008. These agreements should boost regional trade, attract much-needed investment whilst taking into account development needs of the ACP countries. A key element of Louis Michel's policy to reach the Millennium Development Goals has been to focus on support to infrastructure, particularly in Africa, so as to give ACP partners the means to become competitive and generate wealth for their citizens.

## > Giovanni Bersani

BUILDING-BRIDGES BETWEEN THE EU AND ACP



Law graduate, activist against Nazism and fascism in Italy, after World War II, Giovanni Bersani was among the founders of the Italian Movement of Christian workers, vice-president of the ACLI and Italian parliamentarian for seven terms. He was undersecretary of the Ministry of Work during De Gasperi's government in 1952-1953.

As a Member of the European Parliament from 1960, he was especially involved in external relations, particularly with Africa, to develop a European policy of peace through strong relations, towards the end of the sixties. The aim of his political activity was to affirm Europe, according to the spirit of the founding fathers, as a civil and moral power rather than a military force.

He was then vice-president of the Development Committee and member of the External Economic Relations Committee of the European Parliament. At first he joined the Christian Democratic Party, subsequently moving to the European People's Party parliamentary group. From 1976 to 1989, he was President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly created by the Lomé Convention and, at the end of his mandate he was appointed President *Ad honorem* for life. Since the 1980's he has devoted his political life to relationships with non-EU Mediterranean countries. In April 1989 he called upon the first Mediterranean Parliamentarian Assembly for "a total cooperation." This assembly approved a permanent plan of cooperation in which a Joint Parliamentarian Assembly plays a central role, as was the case in the Lomé conventions.

## > Glenys Kinnock

A LEADING LIGHT



Former teacher Glenys Kinnock was elected to the European Parliament in 1994 and re-elected in 1999 and 2004 as one of the MEPs representing Wales. She is a member of the European Parliament's Development and Cooperation Committee and Co-President of the Joint ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) ensuring that its agenda is lively and to the point. As a fellow JPA

member noted at the Wiesbaden JPAs in June 2007: "Our meetings would just not be the same without her." President of the Non Governmental Organisation, *One World Action* and Patron of the *Drop the Debt Campaign*, her development activities extend beyond Parliamentary fora.

All JPA members remember her vibrant plea in favour of the Millennium Development Goals at the November 2006 session in

Barbados where she urged both the ACP countries and the European to focus on essential public services, arguing that “the market alone cannot and should not take over these vital tasks.” She also insisted that “aid has to be more predictable, flexible and timely so that governments can plan and spend on health and education in a concerted and transparent way.” On trade, she then stressed that Europe must have in mind that it “is negotiating EPAs with an ACP group which includes some of the most vulnerable economies in the World.” Finally, she concluded that “none of us will escape the effects of climate change but it is the poorest of us who will disproportionately pay the highest price.”

### > Jean-Robert Goulongana

A CONCILIATOR AT HEART



When Jean-Robert Goulongana was appointed head of the ACP Secretariat, in the countdown to the signing of the future Lomé Convention, many observers had deep misgivings about the Group's ability to see through certain changes in the cooperative relationship with the EU. Equally, others did not hold out much hope for much cooperation between ACP countries at the end of the trade talks that were to take place.

However, Goulongana was quick to size up the situation, realising that the group's strength was conditional upon the abilities of the Secretariat, which itself was down to its stand-alone status and above all its depoliticisation. Above all, the Secretary General's role is to serve the states and supervise the group and Goulongana took on this task, rallying flagging spirits whenever there was a risk of losing momentum.

While he might describe himself as a servant, he is, in reality, more of a conductor - the musicians play and he sets the tempo. His skills as a negotiator, reconciler and facilitator have helped the Group out of some tight corners and allowed the ACP-EU cooperation process to clear one or two hurdles, to say the least. He has fiercely argued the case of the ACP countries, yet never failed to pay close attention to their partner's viewpoints.

Goulongana brought these conciliatory skills to bear in several areas, including the “political dialogue” between the EU and the ACP countries on human rights, the EPA negotiations, and the WTO consultations. Time and again he has proved to be a master in managing the follow-up to negotiations between often disparate parties.

Manuela Carzo,  
Abbracciamo il mondo,  
2007 Manifesta!  
© Africa e Mediterraneo

### > Sir John Kaputin

HANDLING CHANGE



Appointed Secretary General of the ACP Group of States on March 1, 2005, Sir John Kaputin is a lawyer with a lengthy track record of political service as an MP in his home country for 30 years (Papua New Guinea from 1972 to 2002). A knowledgeable expert on the finer points of ACP-EU cooperation, he has been involved in the Lomé Conventions and the Cotonou

Agreement since 1978 and was Joint President of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly from 1995 to 1997.

Sir John joined his government early in his political career and stayed almost constantly from 1973 to 2002 in a series of ministerial posts (Justice, Planning and Development, Finance, Mines, Energy, Foreign Affairs) and eventually as Minister for International Financial Institutions. ■

#### Keywords

EU; ACP; Dieter Frisch; Sir John Kaputin; Jean-Robert Goulongana; Louis Michel; Giovanni Bersani; Glenys Kinnock; Michel Rocard; Edwin Carrington; Claude Cheysson; Ghebray Berhane; JPA; Lomé; EPA.



# Debate ignites on MARKET for BIOFUELS

*Palm trees sway majestically in Sierra Leone's bush signalling the potential market for palm oil to produce biofuels. But in Brussels circles there are warnings about the flipside...*

**T**he threat of climate change associated with global warming and higher oil prices are driving forward the use of alternative fuels like biofuels which produce less carbon emissions. Biofuels can be made from maize, soya, rapeseed, sugar cane and palm, and can either be used pure if an engine is adapted, or mixed with standard diesel and petrol.

In March 2007, EU Heads of State and Government agreed that by 2020 10 per cent of all the EU's transport fuels will be from biofuels from a sustainable source.

A year on and a meeting of the biofuels' industry has said that production needs to be stepped up if this target is to be met. At the 13 March congress of World Biofuels Markets, Industry representative Olivier Schaeffer and Policy Chief at the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) said: “I believe we can hit the target of 10 per cent. And the potential is much higher than this.”

In other Brussels meeting rooms in March, enthusiasm about the future for biofuels was more diluted. Participants at a European Parliament seminar, ‘Biofuels – eco-saviours or destroyers’, raised fears that more land turned over to grow crops for biofuels will

mean less land cultivated for food crops and hikes in food prices.

At the same meeting, the fact that huge tracks of forest to grow crops for biofuels will lead to a loss of biodiversity was clearly voiced.

And Lester Brown, Director of the Washington-based Earth Policy Institute warned at the Brussels' launch of his book *Plan B 3.0 Mobilizing to Save Civilisation*: “Historically the food and energy economies were separate. But with so many ethanol distilleries now being built to convert grain into fuel, the two are merging. In this new situation the world price of grain is moving towards its oil equivalent value. Suddenly the world is facing a moral and political issue that has no precedent: should we use grain to fuel cars or to feed people?”

Predicted Brown: “The risk is that rising grain prices will lead to chaos in world grain markets and to food riots in low and middle-income countries that import grain.”

### > Knee-jerk reaction

Claire Wenner, Head of the London-based Biofuels Renewable Energy Association said at the meeting of biofuel industrialists: “Biofuels use about one per cent of global land available

for agriculture (the figure is slightly higher across Europe). For Wenner, “there is a real danger that blaming biofuels will become a knee-jerk reaction that stops us from dealing with the much larger issues of food and energy needs over the next 50 years.”

At the European Parliament conference, others called for more investment in so-called ‘second generation’ biofuels like jatropha, a woody shrub producing inedible golf ball-sized fruit with seeds containing oil that can be turned into biodiesel and – a big plus – which can be grown on waste land.

Meanwhile countries like Sierra Leone face decisions. Interviewed by *The Courier* in Freetown, Agriculture Minister Dr Sam Sesay said he had received many requests from investors in palm oil, but cautioned: “Firstly we want to concentrate on satisfying domestic needs before we start to think about exports. But we don't want palm oil to reduce other crops like rice, coffee and cocoa. We need a balance to make sure that we do not lose other important crops.” **D.P.** ■

#### Keywords

Debra Percival; Sierra Leone; Energy; Biofuels.

# A day in the life of KING FISHER

## A Sierra Leonean musician with 'conscious vibes'



It's Saturday and the venue is Body Guard Studio in a backstreet in Freetown with King Fisher, Sierra Leone's no. 1 DJ turned musician, music producer and documentary maker. He's just back from up country where he's been shooting videos to heighten public understanding of issues facing Sierra Leoneans.

A passion for his nation and music immerse Fisher. Opportunities to relax are rare. It's a 6.30 start and after listening to *BBC World News*, it's straight to the studio to hook up new equipment for music and video production.

For many Sierra Leoneans like King Fisher, aka Emrys Savage, the civil war altered the course of the future. The music scene in his country took off during the decade-long conflict of the '90s, "when everything else ceased to function."

"At that time I was a DJ and we started having rap competitions. Most of the time, I was chosen to be the judge. At one of them I met a group called *Black Roots*. They were the first young group to play live music. I was so impressed that I made a promise to help with the albums. That was in 1995."

In 1997, Fisher started to compose his own songs. He explains how the studio's name came about: "There was a British Forces broadcasting station, with a very powerful DJ who had a group of guys called the

*Bodyguard*. I just took the name from them. I also saw the name kind of protecting against many things that were to come later."

He speaks of the influence of Jimmy Bangura (aka Jimmy B), a Sierra Leonean with a record deal with EMI who spent most of his youth in the United States and South Africa, and was the first to bring digital equipment to Sierra Leone. He set up Paradise Recording Studio after the war in 2002 and gave the opportunity to young people, collectively known as the Paradise Family, to release the first album made in Sierra Leone. It was a big hit. "I tried to get *Black Roots* into the Paradise Family but couldn't. But I made a promise to them that one day I would set up my own recording studio."

Another door opened for Fisher when he was working for Search for Common Ground, a Sierra Leonean NGO with whom he has continued to work, shooting videos on issues of concern to Sierra Leoneans from health to tackling corruption. "I met an expatriate guy who was setting up the digital equipment there. I thought, wow, I can buy a computer, I can buy a few things, hook them up and make a studio. And that became the digital studio."

Fisher breaks off for a tea break at 10.30 then heads straight back to the studio until lunch at 3 pm. He tells us about his first album release. "When we did our first compilation at the Body Guard Studio called the *Body Guard Revolution Chapter 1* people asked me, 'what's the mean-



Emmerson's popular album produced by King Fisher © Emmerson

ing of the revolution, do you want to go back to war?" I told them that this one is a positive revolution." For Fisher, 'conscious vibes' are important to each album: "When I did that first album, I told the guys that we have to speak about things that led us to war."

### > U go si am

"On that album there was a song in Krio called, *U go si am* or *You will see*, sung by Emmerson," Fisher continues: "the message was that you are corrupt and are misusing the country's resources and one day it will come fall back on you. That one became a very big hit. People so fell in love with that song because it said what they wanted to say and couldn't."

Fisher went on to produce a solo album, *Borbor Bele* for Emmerson Bockarie. Its title track also hit a public nerve. "It means a human being with a huge stomach, or you are embezzling money, that's why your stomach is so big." Fisher claims the song brought down the last government. So has he ever been censored? "Never," he replies.

Fisher explains his musical blend: "Most of the young guys are into the hip-hop, Notorious B.I.G and Tupac, all the rap stuff, so I thought why not bring the rap into the local language, Krio, and blend the hip-hop beat with Caribbean and Jamaican type of music. At first people laughed. Now everybody's playing it."

Many young people in Sierra Leone are now trying to make money out of music. Fisher fears some of what is produced is sub-stan-

dard. He also intends to do something about piracy. You just have to go to any crossroads to get hold of a cheap, copied compilation for just 4,000 Leones – under US\$2.

"We've formed an organisation, the National Association of Performing Artists (NAPA). There is an anti-piracy law but the problem is that it's outdated. So if you take somebody who has been pirating your stuff to court you will end up spending more than what the court will award you. We are going to use the power of music again to change things. We haven't got the name of the song yet. They have to bring that law into full functionality."

Fisher is working on two albums, one of which is dedicated to children and is to be sung mostly by kids from an orphanage. Sierra Leone has signed up to the Child Rights Bill of the United Nations, he says, but parliament has yet to ratify it. "The focus will be on getting parliament to sit up and pass that bill. Basic education is supposed to be free but when you go to school there are so many charges, like buying books, that you find out that you are spending more than if it was not free."

He's also brought on the current hottest female star in Sierra Leone, DJ Lulu: "She went through a lot of things as a kid. She is of mixed race. Her father is Lebanese and her mother is Sierra Leonean. But the Lebanese Community doesn't like those kinds of relationships. Her father died when she was very young so the Lebanese side of her relatives decided to push

her out so she struggled for herself. She has a song about the way she grew up, *Na Me Kam So*. She is saying: "You thought I wouldn't get here but here I am."

He's also busy with videos for Search for Common Ground on local governance. Local council elections will be held in July 2008. "What we are doing is going to locations across the regions and capturing footage of how councils are performing and trying to compare them with other councils so when they have council workshops with councillors from different areas they can play these videos and the people can comment and say, this council is doing good with their money, or this council is not performing." The aim is to give people a voice for change. Another of Fisher's concern is a guarantee of a government of unity including all tribes: "This is going to be the subject of one of my songs."

It's around 7 pm and Fisher leaves his studio to hang out with 'his men' and drink a beer. After, he may watch an action film. And he'll have to find time, he says, to get his dancing legs working again for the launch of the new albums. **D.P.** ■

### Keywords

Debra Percival; King Fisher; Sierra Leone Musician; Rap.

Pages 26 & 27  
King Fisher in the Talking Drum Studio, Search for Common Ground, Freetown (Sierra Leone), 2008.  
© Alfred Bangura aka Funky Fred, Talking Drum Studio



# DAM UNDER CLOSE WATCH

Uganda's third dam on the Nile (positioned where the river flows out of Lake Victoria), should enable it to generate the energy it crucially lacks without any negative environmental effects. This is at least the conclusion of the impact study commissioned by the World Bank. In the wake of the study, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has decided to co-fund the project.

On 7 January, the EIB agreed a US\$136M (€92M) loan to the Ugandan company, Bujagali Energy Limited (BEL). BEL is responsible for the construction and operation of a dam and hydroelectric plant of 250-megawatt capacity in Bujagali, on the Upper Nile, downstream from Lake Victoria. In addition to the EIB, other co-funders will be the International Finance Corporation (the World Bank subsidiary that grants loans to the private sector), the African Development Bank (ADB) and a group of European financial institutions. In all, the loan comes to the equivalent of €462M. This decision puts an end to the

delays surrounding this project, which has been condemned by a coalition of local organisations, both international and Ugandan, and some riverside dwellers, due to its impact on the environment.

The project promoters argue that the hydroelectricity produced on the Nile will be the cheapest energy option for a country like Uganda, which has no access to the sea and is one of the poorest African nations. Bujagali will in fact provide support for two other dams: the Nalubaale Dam, built by the British in the late 1950s, and the Kiira Dam, built by Kampala authorities in the 1990s. The EIB has stressed that these two dams do not have enough capacity to meet a growing demand for electricity and acknowledges that power outages during periods of low water flow cause serious disruption to the country's economic activity. Building a third dam downstream will make it possible to increase electricity production and, better still, Bujagali will be reusing the water already used to produce electricity at the upstream dams.

## > A threat to the health of Lake Victoria?

The Ugandan Dam Development Forum, a group of ten NGOs, has worries about the project's long-term viability. Drawing on a report by the American NGO International River Networks (IRN), the Forum believes that the dams are partly responsible for falling water

levels in Lake Victoria. It is also concerned that no study has yet been carried out to assess the impact of climate change on the lake's hydrological health. A number of studies have subsequently been carried out to determine the project's environmental and social fall-out.

For its part, the EIB says any environmental impact will be relatively limited. A study by Canadian consultants Burnside, commissioned by the World Bank, suggests that the Bujagali project will not 'significantly' impair the lake, nor the river's hydrology. It says that the only aspect of the project that requires continual monitoring is changes to downstream water levels. The consultancy recommends the introduction of a management plan for this. Whatever the case, the EIB has promised that the project is – and will continue to be – monitored with measures taken, if necessary, in line with stringent international standards which stipulate close consultation with the local population, local authorities and all other associations affected.

M.M.B. ■

### Keywords

Marie-Martine Buckens; Uganda; Lake Victoria; Nile; EIB; Dam.

Top  
The Nile.  
© iStockphoto.com/FrankvandenBergh

Bottom left  
Victoria falls, Uganda.  
© iStockphoto.com/Lingbeek



# R

**eport**

Urban farming near Freetown. Sierra Leone has great agricultural potential 2008. © Debra Percival

# SIERRA LEONE

By Debra Percival

To be able to switch on lights for the first time – earlier this year – brought expectation of change for those citizens of Freetown who were used to being in the dark. President Ernest Bai Koroma won a slim victory in the run-off elections in September 2007, and energy generation remains a top priority. The Bumbuna hydro electric power plant project, which Koroma has himself described as, "the longest hydro project in human history", should be completed this year and there is anticipation of other projects to boost output beyond Freetown to rural areas. Koroma has told the public that he will not stop "until we are in a position of get-

ting 100 megawatts for the country." It's now over five years since the end of a brutal 11-year diamond-fuelled conflict waged by rebels that displaced almost half the population, left tens of thousands dead and others suffering, and government bodies and the economy in tatters. Sierra Leone is still at the bottom of the United Nations' Human Development (UNDP) Index. Yet with the assistance of international donors, including the EU, is building up government institutions and reforming all sectors of the economy: mining, agriculture and tourism for all Sierra Leoneans.



# From PEACEBREAKING to peacemaking

When Portuguese explorer Pedro da Cintra came across the mountains surrounding what is now the country's capital Freetown in 1462, he named the land 'Sierra Lyoa', meaning 'lion mountains'. To his eyes, the jagged heights were shaped like a lion's teeth. The new government of Ernest Bai Koroma wants the page to turn on past rage and help his nation make an economic roar.

By the 16th century, English sailors referred to the country as 'Sierra Leoa'. During the late 1700s, Bunce Island, close to Freetown, became one of the major slave trading operations along the West African coast. It was in 1782 that British philanthropists founded the 'Province of Freetown', resettling some of London's black poor in Sierra Leone in the 'The Province of Freedom'. Thousands of freed enslaved Africans were returned to Freetown. They settled from all over Africa and came to be known as the 'Krio' people. The Krio language is spoken widely amongst the country's 15 ethnic groups today.

In 1808, Sierra Leone became an official British crown colony and the seat of government for its other West African colonies along the coast. The establishment of one of the first higher education colleges in West Africa in 1827, Fourah Bay College, excelled in medicine, law and education and led to Freetown being known as the 'Athens of Africa'.

## > One-party state

Sir Milton Margai, leader of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), was appointed the country's Chief Minister in 1953. Sierra Leone won its independence from the British in 1961 and Margai became its first Prime Minister. Siaka Stevens, candidate of the All People's Congress (APC), won the elections of March 1967, but was ousted after just a few hours, only to be returned to power in 1968. In 1971, the country became a republic with Stevens, then Prime Minister, appointed as Executive President. In 1978, a new constitution proclaimed Sierra Leone as a one-party state with the APC as the sole legal party. Major Joseph Saidu Momoh became President on Stevens's retirement in 1985 following a one-party referendum.

President Momoh's constitutional review recommended re-establishing in 1991 a multi-party democratic constitution. By this time, suspicions of



Child selling bananas, Moyamba. Many children work to relieve poverty 2008. © Debra Percival



Wall painting. Football is a national passion 2008. ©

abuse of power and mismanagement of the diamond resources were rife, both of which were triggering factors of the civil war that ensued.

Former army corporal, Foday Sankoh, and his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) campaigned against Momoh, capturing towns on the border with Liberia. Its initial attacks were on the Kailahun District in the diamond-rich east.

Another factor at the start of the conflict was war in neighbouring Liberia. Charles Taylor, then rebel leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia, allegedly helped the RUF in return for Sierra Leonean diamonds.

Due to the government's failure to deal with the rebels at the time, army captain Valentine Strasser launched a military coup sending Momoh into exile in Guinea in April 1992. Strasser formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), which was to last four years.

## > New elections

By 1995, the rebels held much of the diamond-rich eastern province and were on the doorstep of Freetown. The NPRC allegedly hired mercenaries from the private security firm, *Executive Outcomes*, to repel the rebels. But there was unhappiness about the handling of the crisis and Strasser was subsequently ousted in a coup led by his defence minister, Brigadier General Julius Maada Bio. Bio subsequently re-instated the constitution and called for elections. SLPP candidate, Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, was democratically elected and voted into office in 1996.

An alleged attempt to overthrow Kabbah by Major General Johnny Koroma resulted in Koroma's trial and imprisonment. Unhappy with this decision, a group of soldiers, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), overthrew the president and released Koroma – who in turn became president and invited the RUF to join him in government on banning political parties, demonstrations and shutting down private radio.

These moves led to UN Security Council sanctions in 1997 including banning arms and petroleum products in 1997. In March 1998, the West African Peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, reinstalled Kabbah. The next year another attempt to overthrow the government by the AFRC, with RUF backing, left 5,000 dead in Freetown and widespread devastation.

## > UNMSIL

In October 1999, UN peacekeepers restored order and disarmed rebel forces. A total of 17,000 'blue helmets' of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNMSIL) were eventually sent to the country, describes Christian Holger Stohmann, Information Officer with the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) in Freetown. The ensuing 1999 ceasefire and peace agreement in the Togolese capital of Lomé ensured positions in government for the rebels.

But Sam Bokari, one of the rebel leaders, retaliated against the presence of UN troops who were attacked and abducted in the east. A contingent of 800 British paratroopers arrived to secure the airport for the peacekeepers and Foday Sankoh was captured. In May 2001, the disarmament of rebels began with the aid of Sierra Leone's national army.

In January 2002, war was officially over. The SLPP's Kabbah won a landslide victory in multi-party elections the same year. He was defeated by APC candidate, Ernest Bai Koroma, in the 2007 Presidential election. Koroma campaigned on a ticket of change.

## > Mutilation

It is difficult to meet someone who hasn't been directly affected by brutal war crimes. Horrifying accounts of mutilation, with victims chosen at random, are still vivid. One young Freetown resident, 'Kenneth', describes how he was ordered to stand flat against a wall with his hands tied whilst rebels argued about whether to sever his limbs. He was freed, but many others were mul-

tilated, including women and children. Another young man 'Kanu' recounts how his sister disappeared for three months in the bush where young women were stolen to cook and clean for rebels. Rape was common. Many child soldiers were killed. For victims with missing arms and legs, it is now doubly hard to find employment in a country where 65 per cent young men 18-40 have no employment.

A Special Court established post-war by the United Nations, at the request of the Sierra Leonean government, still sits but is due to wind up during 2010, explains Francesca Varlese, project manager at the EU Delegation in Freetown. The EU has been giving financial backing to the Court since 2003, providing services such as a live video feed to listen to the ongoing trial of Charles Taylor from the Hague and internships so the Court's legacy will continue.

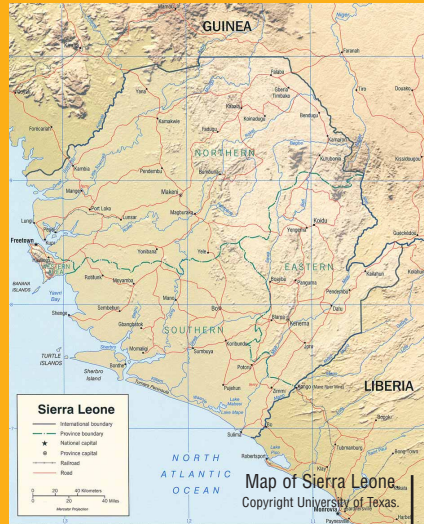


Poster of Special Court – punishable crimes 2008. © Debra Percival

Opinion is however divided over the Court's effectiveness, says Ambrose James who is Country Director of the NGO, 'Search for Common Ground', which produces videos and radio broadcasts to voice the views of all Sierra Leoneans. He says Sierra Leoneans have mixed feelings about the Court. Firstly, the 'big rebel leaders' like Sam Bokari, 'Mosquito', and others either died or fled.

Then there is also confusion about why some members of the Civil Defence Force are before the Court. After all, they opposed the rebels. "People didn't realise that they carried out some human rights abuses, so this is where there are complications," says Ambrose James in his Freetown office. He added that there are also questions about the functions of the Special

## Statistics for Sierra Leone



Area: 73,326 sq km

Population: 5.9M (2007)

Forecast: 6.9M (2015)

UNDP Index: 177 out of 177 countries (2007-2008 Human Development Report)

Life expectancy: 41.8 (2005)

Adult literacy rate (% age 15 per cent or older): 34.8 (1995-2005)

Under five mortality rate (per 1,000 births): 282 (2005)

Imports: €306M (foodstuffs, machinery, fuels)\*

Exports: €163.5M (diamonds, rutile, cocoa, bauxite, coffee, fish, iron ore, palm kernels)\*

### Political landscape

President: Ernest Bai Koroma since September 2007

Unicameral House - President elected by popular vote every five years. President's tenure is restricted to two terms. Parliamentarians are elected by popular vote every five years.

Main political parties: All People's Congress (APC), Sierra Leone People's party (SLPP), People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC). 12 independently elected Paramount Chiefs representing the country's districts also sit in Parliament.

Sources: World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), European Commission, Sierra Leone Encyclopedia 2007.

Websites: [www.sfcg.org](http://www.sfcg.org), [www.sc-sl.org](http://www.sc-sl.org)

\* 2006

Court and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission – a creation of the Lomé Peace agreement. One metes out forgiveness, the other punishment.

Two million Sierra Leoneans were also displaced either internally or in neighbouring countries. The war and previous upheavals have left their legacy on the economy and society. Sierra Leone numbers 177 out of 177 in the United Nations' Human Development Index for 2007-2008, having ranked particularly low in child mortality and other statistics on health and education.

Very young children eek out a living on the streets selling bags of fruit or biscuits. Adult literacy is just 30 per cent and 68 per cent of the population lives on less than a dollar a day.

### > High expectations

There's a lot of hope vested in the new government of Ernest Bai Koroma. He has pledged to govern in a "business" style and faces a popularity test in the upcoming local elections in July 2008.

There are other promising changes in government. An Anti-Corruption Commission created in 2000 is intent on stamping out corruption in all walks of life, explains Abdul Tejan-Cole, who has been at its helm since December 2007. He suggests radio jingles to encourage the public to become whistleblowers and wants parliamentarians to declare their assets.

There is a lot to do to build the apparatus of government with the country currently dependent on budget support from major donors, which fill the gap in government revenue.

The big four donors in Sierra Leone are the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the EU, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB). All meet regularly to discuss "benchmarks" for the disbursement of budget aid such as whether the government is managing its finances and meeting anti-poverty targets.

Together, the four give €52M of budget support annually, or 17 per cent of the Sierra Leone national budget. In 2007, fiduciary difficulties interrupted budget aid, which was largely due to unpredicted fuel price rises, explains Hans Allden, the EU's Head of Delegation in Sierra Leone. He stressed the delicate nature of budget aid; good financial management on the one hand and a predictable flow of budget aid on the other: "If not, all kinds of payment problems arise which even affect security. A group of hungry, unpaid people is not good for stability."

The EU and DFID, which coordinate their aid strategy in Sierra Leone, currently provide 42 per cent of total donor funding to the country. Each concentrates on what it does best: the EU on infrastructure and governance, and DFID on education, health and sanitation. Other EU countries with bi-lateral aid programmes for Sierra Leone are Ireland, Germany, Italy and France.

And according to Hans Allden the country would eventually like Sierra Leonean nationals to train as peacekeepers themselves. This is, he says, "a matter of immense pride for the country." **D.P.**

### Keywords

Debra Percival; Sierra Leone; UN; DFID; Budget Aid.

# The BUSINESS of GOVERNANCE

Interview with Ernest Bai Koroma, President of Sierra Leone.

Ernest Bai Koroma won the 8 September 2007 presidential runoff election, defeating the opposition candidate of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), Solomon Ekuma Berewa. No single candidate won the 55 per cent of the vote needed for a win in the first round. Koroma has set out to apply his business skills to running a government. He is a former managing director of the Reliance Insurance Trust Corporation, a fellow of the West African Insurance Institute, Associate of the UK's Institute of Risk Management and a member of the UK's Institute of Directors in the UK. Koroma's All Peoples' Congress (APC) party holds a majority of 59 seats in Parliament following the August 2007 elections. He has signed 'contracts' with his Ministers to ensure the delivery of results, he told us in an interview in State House, Freetown at the end of February 2008.

*You were brought in as a ticket of change. What changes have you made so far?*

I have put in place a mechanism that will lay the basis for a turnaround where we will see the country begin to move again and have investors come in. We have brought about a peaceful transition from the past government to this government. We have also addressed the issue that we believe should be primary in our objective, that is, providing energy for this country.

Freetown now has a certain amount of electricity. We solicited the participation of the World Bank and other donors and put into action an



Independent Power Production programme (IPP) where generating power was given to the private sector with the National Power Authority (NPA) doing the sales. We inherited six megawatts of power generation and added 15 megawatts. That has given us a situation of 21–22 megawatts and we have requisitioned an independent power generator

## The completion of Bumbuna hydroelectric station

adding an extra ten megawatts.

What's next is to find a medium-term solution which lies in the completion of Bumbuna hydroelectric station. The donor community has given us the US\$45M required to finish the project this year. As for our commitment to having electricity throughout the country, we have to embark on a rural electrification programme. As we speak, the Chinese are examining our hydroelectric potential. There is a possibility of having mini hydro-projects all over if we can successfully harness the five rivers that flow across the country.

*Which sectors will alleviate poverty?*

For any country coming out of war you have to address the humanitarian and social stabilisation issues. You must also address issues of the amputees and the displaced. Now is the time for us to go into real economic growth and to create an impact on the economy. In addition to mining there is tourism, fisheries and agriculture.

About 60-70 per cent of our people are engaged in agriculture. We have the potential of not just feeding ourselves but also exporting our agricultural produce. It is only when we will be able to commercialise agri-



culture that we will be able to address poverty reduction seriously.  
*You have said you want to run Sierra Leone like a business?*

We have to be more business-like. We have just come from a governmental retreat in Bumbuna and identified goals. We have made a promise that in the next 36 months we should start seeing a turnaround. That's why I have initiated management contracts for ministers. They are now all talking with State House and agreeing on both their annual targets and those they should achieve over the next three years.

**"We have to be more business-like."**

*How can you attract overseas investors?*

We are reviewing our laws, improving the independence and credibility of the judiciary and putting up a strong fight against corruption to ensure that people will be guaranteed fair play. This will bring in investors. We have about the best diamonds in the world, the largest deposits of rutile, huge deposits of iron ore, bauxite and platinum, etc. We also have huge potential in the agricultural sector. On top of this is our unique tourist potential. With the right investment Sierra Leone can easily become the best tourist destination in the world. Our flora and fauna, topography and beaches are not found anywhere else.

*Sierra Leone is right at the bottom of UNDP index. How can you move up?*

We have just launched the 2008-2010 strategy plan for children and others. We are reviewing our education system and are working on improving on the number of people who have access to pipe-borne water as well as improving our medical facilities. When all of that is on course, I think the focus will be for us to motivate the people in charge of these services, those who deliver; doctors, nurses and teachers.

*Are you confident of repeated success in the July local elections?*

I believe that we will win most of the seats in the country because in a very short period the citizens have come to realize that we are a results-oriented government. We don't talk politics. What we say is what we do, as in the case with electricity. We will be launching our agricultural programme and want to

ensure a health programme. You don't expect to see tangible results overnight. What you see is activity in government: an effort by us to work on the promises made to our people, and I think that people have trust in that. The only difficulty for us is that we have come in at a time when world market prices are increasing. The price of fuel is on the rise, as are the prices of rice and wheat. It is unfortunate that some of these have a direct impact on the life of the ordinary man. We cannot subsidise, as we do not have the funds. We are not an oil producing country.

*Is your government ethnically biased?*

This is not the case. We have people from the other regions; our ministers of Health and Marine Resources, for example. I have always insisted that it is a government of inclusion and we have people of every district represented, not only in governance but also at deputy minister level. We are appointing people to state-run companies and diplomatic missions, all of whom represent the national character.

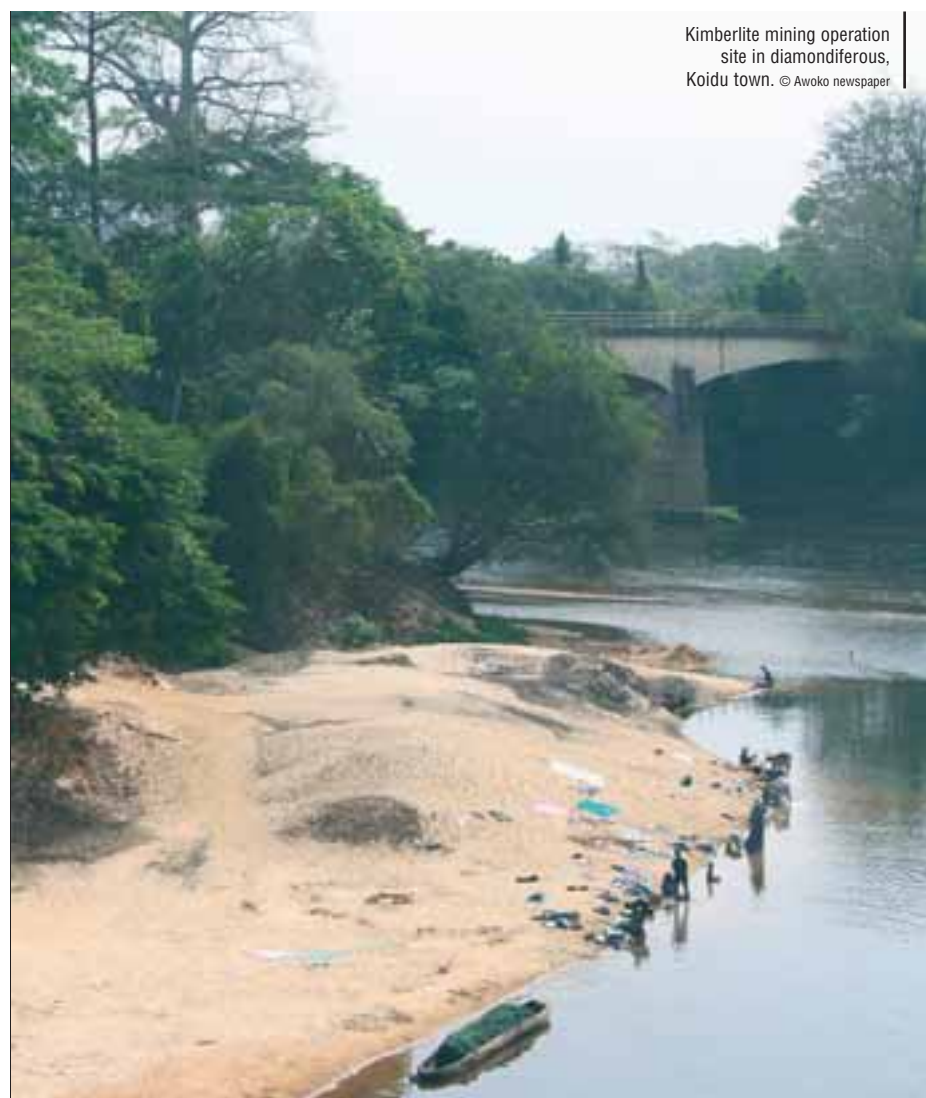
*What is your view about the focus on budget aid in your partnership with the EU?*

It is important for it to continue, as our revenue base is very limited. We are asking for support to give us an opportunity to stand on our feet. When we kickstart the activities in mining, agriculture and tourism, I think we will have enough to run our budget and take care of our development endeavours. The EU is also playing a lead role in infrastructure programmes. Just like energy, an improved road network will facilitate economic activities in the country. It will create free movement of people, help the movement of agricultural commodities and enhance tourism and trade with our neighbours, Guinea and Liberia. **D.P. ■**

Website: [www.statehouse.gov.sl](http://www.statehouse.gov.sl)

**Keywords**

**Debra Percival; President Ernest Bai Koroma; Sierra Leone; Budget Aid; Electricity.**



Kimberlite mining operation site in diamondiferous, Koidu town. © Awoko newspaper

# A TWO-WAY OPPOSITION

*The largest opposition party, the Sierra Leone's People's Party (SLPP), has dominated the political landscape in Sierra Leone along with the current ruling All People's Congress (APC). The SLPP came into existence in 1951 and agitated for independence from Britain, won in 1961. It has been in active opposition to the ruling APC, formed in 1960.*

**E**ach has its respective stronghold, the SLPP amongst the population in the south and east amongst the Mende ethnic group, which makes up roughly 30 per cent of the population. Most of the APC's supporters are found in the north and west amongst Temnes who also make up 30 per cent of the population.

The SLPP won 43 seats at the last parliamentary elections in August 2007. It maintains its candidate won the 8 September 2007 presidential run-off elections: "From all indications, we won the elections. For reasons best known to the Electoral Commission, we were robbed of that victory. Four hundred and seventy-seven stations in our stronghold were cancelled and never read," the party's National Administrative Secretary, Brima Koroma, told us in his Freetown office in February.\*

His declaration is in spite of both the Parliamentary and Presidential elections being declared "free and fair" by a

multitude of international election observers present, including those from the EU. Former SLPP President, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, was in power for 11 years prior to stepping down before the 2007 elections: "Our first priority as a party was that people give us a mandate to return to peace. This was our pledge. Having said that, we won the election in 1996 and had to run the country from exile 1996-1997. We set our target to end war, which was delivered," said Koroma.

He went on to add that the SLPP government successfully reconstructed the country when war officially ended in 2000: "It took a whole lot of our time to repair damage and devastation in the provinces. There were no hospitals or schools. Benchmarks were achieved. In 2002, the economy of the country was stable, even the leone [currency] compared to the dollar." He said the SLPP government reintroduced local councils in 2004. Things now are "unimaginably difficult," Koroma said, singling out the high cost of rice.

**▶ A third power**

The Peoples' Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) holds 10 parliamentary seats and four ministerial posts – in return for back-

ing the APC in the September presidential run-off, explained its secretary general, lawyer Ansu Lansana. His party gives Sierra Leoneans a third choice: "The two have been playing political ping-pong for quite a long time so our people have been clamouring for a third force." PMDC supporters are largely "...disaffected, unemployed and abandoned Sierra Leoneans," Lansana told us.

He said the 11 years of former SLPP rule were characterised by gross inefficiency: "A leadership that was also too preoccupied with old politics where your grandfather and father were born SLPP, so you must be SLPP. This kind of approach to politics is detrimental to national development because it does not encourage governance by performance."

And his opinion of the new government: "The only problem I have is that they have started renegeing on some of their campaign promises. My perception of the country is one of guarded optimism. Because there are certain things that are positive and forward-looking but there are others that are still reminiscent of the past: joblessness and disorderliness..." **D.P. ■**

\* 12 paramount chiefs, one for each district of the country, also sit in parliament

**Keywords**

**Debra Percival; Sierra Leone; Politics; Opposition.**



Housing, Kroo Bay, Freetown 2008. © Debra Percival

# GOVERNMENT DIGS DEEP to reform mining



“We are the second largest producer of rutile in the world (and the number one producer of raw rutile). We have big deposits of bauxite and iron ore. We have diamonds scattered all over the country and we are mining the source rock for diamonds, kimberlite and gold,” explained Alhaji Abubakar Jallon, Minister of Mineral Resources, former Executive Director of the National Diamond Company and former geophysicist.

With registered diamond exports worth US\$125.3M in 2006, the gem is the country's number one export without counting its unregistered trade. Altogether the mining sector provides a livelihood for 250,000 people or 14 per cent of the labour force, but the government feels that mining could bring in more for Sierra Leoneans.

The past fiscal regime has not attracted a large number of quality investments, say World Bank officials. Other drawbacks are a lack of transparency in granting mineral rights, large numbers of unlicensed, informal artisanal miners, as well as smuggling of gold and diamonds and the environmental and social impacts on local communities. According to World Bank figures, just 2 per cent of fiscal revenues came from the sector in 2000.

A World Bank technical assistance project (US\$6M via the International Development Association) is expected to be approved in July 2008 to look at ways of making the industry more transparent in the current regime, increasing mining revenues for the government and improving governance support for Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)\*, which the country committed to in 2006. This will back up steps to regulate the sector so far including the 2003 Core Mineral Policy and collection of geodata.

Minister Jallon wants companies to do more to build up infrastructure around mines: “If you are mining somewhere, give us an electrical plant that will serve both you and the people of the area. A recent mining forum held in Conakry, Guinea, sponsored by the World Bank and African Development Bank (ADB), reached the consensus that we should link mining with infrastructure.”

And there should be no repeat of the old type of agreement, the Minister told us. One example is *Delcros*, an iron mining company that when oper-

## A sub-committee to look at all the agreements

ating for 20 years built a railway and port to export. When the mine closed, the port and railway were redundant: “This is the sort of situation that should not occur anymore,” he said.

“If we are going to allow anyone now to develop the mine – because a lot of people are coming to see us and there are other deposits like more than 100 million tonnes of bauxite as well as the remnants of the iron ore – we are encouraging them to form a consortium between those who want to



Minister of Mineral Resources, Alhaji Abubakar Jallon 2008. © Debra Percival

mine iron ore and those that want to mine bauxite, as they have to use the same railway and the same ports,” said Jallon.

He added: “The cabinet has empowered me to set up a sub-committee to look at all the agreements of the big mining companies, and in the process we will inject that into the new agreements between us and the mining companies.”

“The worst thing we have discovered is that people come here and get a mining exploration licence which they take to the stock market and raise money on our heads. They say it's legal but we want to change this,” continued Jallon. Alfred Carew, executive secretary of the National Forum on Human Rights and chair of the National Advocacy Coalition on Extraction, told us that he believes Internet companies are doing the same thing. He's worried about the social costs of mining, such as the employment of child stonecrackers, prostitution, disease in mining areas and the environmental fallout.

The Minister spoke about the current ‘free-for-all’ in the diamond district of Kono and related smuggling: “We try our best to organise it in a structured way. In most cases you have a dealer who helps the landowner and workers get machinery. You then have to sell to this man because he's the one who helped you. This man will give the diamonds to an exporter who has a licence and is the only one with the authority to export. To get the licence you have to pay US \$40,000. We believe that smuggling takes place in between this but we can't prove it.”

He said that the country subscribes to the Kimberley Process, which prohibits sale of diamonds from the world's conflict zones: “I sign a Kimberley certificate for anybody who is exporting. But you have to go to the destination to get an end picture. Somebody has to be there however to check if the diamonds arrived. There's heavy administration involved.”

D.P. ■

\* The EITI involves the regular publication of revenues paid to governments by all materials, oil, gas and mining companies.

### Keywords

Sierra Leone; Mining; Diamonds; Iron ore; Rutile.

## Trailblazing SIERRA RUTILE LTD.

A €24M loan grant in part from ‘SYSMIN’, the EC's former fund to assist the mining sector with the remainder from the European Development Fund (EDF) has enabled *Sierra Rutile Ltd.* to start up again in the Bonthe District in the South-west. Rutile (titanium dioxide) is mainly exported to Europe, North America, Brazil, Japan and Russia where it is used in paint pigment, with the higher grades going to manufacture welding rods.

The grant for the re-start was passed on to the government, which then channelled the monies in the form of a commercial loan to the company. Bob Lloyd, the company's managing director describes it as: “a significant milestone in the re-birth of Sierra Leone at the end of the conflict.” With projected production this year of 180,000 tonnes, the company is already on target to beat last year's 140,000-tonne figure. The extraction process leaves large bodies of water. These can be used for other productive purposes, explained Jean-Pierre Milard, who is an EU-funded technical assistant to the Ministry. And since the process is not toxic, there are many possible ventures. Bob Lloyd explained that *Sierra Rutile Ltd.* has set up a foundation which is currently funding a pilot agriculture reclamation on one of the ‘lakes’. Others include aquaculture and the pristine white sand left beached by mining is triggering thoughts of tourism.

It seems the company has many more years in business. Bob Lloyd showed *The Courier* a map pinpointing the reserves found around Bonthe. And exploration is also ongoing along the coastline.

The capital and interest on the loan amounting to €45M are to be repaid to the government of Sierra Leone 2008–2013, starting with an initial €716,000 in June this year. The EC is expected to have a say in how these monies are used. Bob Lloyd said that relations with the local population were good; officials meet regularly with the eight paramount chiefs of the chiefdoms surrounding the mine. ■



# Focus on farming as RICE PRICE RISES



Artisanal fishing, Alex's beach 2008.  
© Debra Percival

Lush and fertile, it's easy to see why many feel that farming holds huge potential in Sierra Leone. As with many areas of the country's economy, conflict has taken its toll and funds are lacking. Then there's a problem of getting people to work the land. Farming is seen by some as a punishment rather than way of making a living, explained Agriculture Minister Dr Sam Sesay whose task is to stimulate production and create jobs in the sector.

"We will not succeed in poverty reduction if we don't change the circumstances of the farmers," said President Ernest Bai Koroma, visiting Kenema in the east of the country during March this year. Renewable natural resources such as agro-forestry, agriculture and fisheries add up to 50 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) with 75 per cent gaining their livelihood from the sector. The country is heavily reliant on imports for its staples like rice. When we visited at the end of February 2008, the high price of a standard bag of rice caused tempers to flare on the streets of Freetown. It was then around 80,000 leones (approximately \$27US), whereas a bag cost 50,000 leones (US\$17)\* during the election season in August 2007.

The international food crisis was mainly to blame for the price hike, explained President Koroma in Kenema, rather than the new government, and had led to a ban on rice exports in some areas. But he added that the

crisis had put the spotlight on the country's reliance on imports and need to up home production. The government is to set up a produce



Rural scene, Bonthe district 2008.  
© Debra Percival

development agency to look at the whole farming sector and strengthen production. Agriculture Minister, Dr Sam Sesay, told *The Courier* in his Freetown office he was also worried about rice easily getting through the country's porous borders: "We only fulfil 60 per cent of our rice requirement domestically. We have traditionally been rice producers and were in fact exporters in the 1960s. Of concern

## A ban on rice exports in some areas

to the government is that a lot of our rice is interestingly going to neighbouring countries like Liberia and Guinea. Studies have shown that Sierra Leone has a comparative advantage of rice production both in the domestic market and to compete internationally."

He sees a future too in other crops like chili pepper, cashews and ginger beer: "The problem is it [ginger beer] is not properly made.

This is one area where you can do a serious value addition and in fact make it a very good local drink that can be processed virtually anywhere." Cashews, a fruitful crop in the north, will even out the north-south economic divide, said Dr Sesay.

## > Fair price for land

Improved feeder roads, harmonised product standards in countries of the West African regional organisation, ECOWAS, and land tenure were also issues in re-launching the sector, said Sesay who said that in areas where land is for sale "you have to pay a proper price. There is value for land and people are not getting a fair price."

Agriculture is not one of the focal sectors for new EC funding under the 10th EDF. In the post-war period, EDF funding channelled to rural development went to resettling people in rural areas and promoting food security. A resettlement and rehabilitation programme (€30M) was launched for social infrastructure in rural areas countrywide, reconstructing health centres, wells and other infrastructure destroyed by war. It was followed by a €24M Link Relief, Rehabilitation & Development (LLRD) project providing tools and seeds, water and sanitation explained Georges Dehoux, of the Food Security Officer at the EU Delegation in Sierra Leone. He said that in a fertile country like Sierra Leone, "food security should not be a problem." Other food security projects have followed.

With a €4.2M grant from the former EC's Stabilisation of Export Receipt Funding (STABEX) which offsets losses on agricultural export receipts, value is being added to cash crops in Bombali and Tonkolili (rice) and Kono, Kenema and Kailahun (cocoa). Matthias Reusing, Head

of Rural Development at the EU Delegation in Sierra Leone, explained that the country cannot compete with the bulk cocoa exports of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, but working with the Dutch NGO, AGRO ECO, has improved drying

## A shortage of organic Robusta coffee

methods and certified the cocoa as fair trade and organic. Sold at US\$1,000 per tonne pre-dried, it can now fetch upwards of US\$1,400–\$1,600 per tonne.

Reusing suggested that it would be a good time for the country to hone in on the shortage of organic Robusta coffee in the global market. In the EU there is plenty of good Arabica coffee on the market grown at high altitude in Ethiopia, but not of Robusta, which is grown at

a lower level. As Europeans like a blend of Arabica and Robusta, this could be an upcoming niche.

To keep up the momentum of the STABEX project, a €12M sum has been set aside under the 10th EDF to improve production, processing and marketing of cash crops, also including state actors again. And €4M from the 10th EDF will go to decentralisation of the sector building the capacity of district councils and non-state actors. Georges Dehoux emphasised the need to act at a local level to move forward. **D.P.**

Websites: [www.megapesca.org](http://www.megapesca.org), [www.oceanic-dev.com](http://www.oceanic-dev.com)

\* 1 US dollar = 3,000 Leones; 1 Euro = 4,789 Leones

## Keywords

Debra Percival; Sierra Leone; Agriculture; Trade; Fishing.



STABEX cocoa project.  
© EU Delegation Sierra Leone/Matthias Reusing

## A FUTURE IN FISHING

Illegal fishing could be costing Sierra Leone as much as €23M per year, according to an EC-funded report drawn up by the consortium, *Oceanic Développement* (France) and *MEGAPESCA* (Portugal). The study explores the different options for a fisheries partnership with the EU. Some 8,000 artisanal vessels such as dug-out canoes and planked vessels and 52 ocean-going trawlers, mainly South-east Asian and Spanish and Greek boats currently have joint ventures to fish in Sierra Leone's waters. Chinese vessels are allegedly fishing illegally in Sierra Leonean waters, say observers.

"Everything close to shore is critical," said Reusing. One of the four options explored by the consortium is for EU vessels to fish tuna, deep water

shrimp and small pelagic with such an agreement potentially bringing in royalties of €2.5M a year.

Since there is currently an EU ban on Sierra Leone's fish exports – which could be lifted this year – catches under the joint ventures must be entering the EU through a third country, suggested Freetown observers. The EU has just launched a €3M Institutional Support for Fisheries Management (ISFM) to assess stocks and provide technical advice for the conservation of resources working with the Institute of Marine Biology and Oceanography of Sierra Leone. The idea is to establish the current status quo of stocks and develop a sustainable management plan, said Reusing. In future the EU wants to continue to improve hygiene standards in the industry and do more to control and survey fishing in seven West African states, including Sierra Leone, to stamp out illegal fishing. **■**

# Rising to the environmental CHALLENGE

By Gibril Foday-Musa\*



Firewood for sale, roadside 2008.  
© Debra Percival

The hall was colourfully decorated with garlands of EU Member States' flags criss-crossing the roof of the British Council in Freetown. It is 10 December 2007 and the four month-old presidency of Ernest Bai Koroma is about to launch the Gola Forest Programme. The project will protect the 75,000 hectares of tropical forest host to rare mammals like the pygmy hippopotamus, chimpanzee, forest elephant and up to 14 globally threatened bird species including the strange white-necked Picathartes and the Rufous Fishing-owl.

When fewer than 40 per cent of invited public officials turned up at the event, President Ernest Bai Koroma had no alternative but to express great disappointment and admonished his fellow countrymen of the "looming global threat" to the country's natural habitation.

A €3M EU grant over five years was recently earmarked for the Gola Forest Programme through the UK-based Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). It will start up protected area management, capacity building on all levels, livelihood programmes and community engagement in forest management planning, research and biodiversity assessment and environmental education and advocacy. The target is to protect the Gola Forest reserves for biodiversity conservation and community development, creating a new model of sustainable natural resource management in Sierra Leone. It will be implemented jointly with partners – the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone and the National Commission for Environment and Forestry (NACEF). The RSPB is itself soliciting donor support for a €10M endowment fund to generate annual interest payments to run the Gola conservation project in the future.

## ➤ Gola set to become National Park

President Ernest Koroma was thrilled. He linked environmental importance to peace, stability and sustainable development. He also pledged his commitment to a transformation of the Gola Forest into a national park in the future. Koroma ended with a call

to the nation to recognise the devastating impact of environmental hazards.

But the challenges facing the new All Peoples Congress (APC) government in the area of environmental protection is pile-high. Years of civil war in the sub-region saw mass migrations into virgin settlements which are still a heavy burden on biodiversity and flora and fauna. With little knowledge and experience in handling refugee situations, scant attention was paid to the environmental consequences of these migrations by governments, NGOs or United Nations (UN) agencies which were responsible for the establishment of so many new settlements for people running away from danger. This was aggravated by the merciless plunder of the natural resources and the ravage of biodiversity during the war period.

Democratic order and rule of law have triggered governments of the region to attempt to control and regulate activities like logging, mining and hunting, among others, by implementing 'bans' on some of these activities. Logging and the exportation of timber for instance, have been banned by President Koroma's government. A law to combat land degradation through a National Action Plan has been drafted by the government of Sierra Leone in collaboration with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The programme aims to identify the symptoms, causes and effects of land degradation at both local and national levels. Recently the government also suspended the activities of the kimberlite mining company *Koidu Holdings* after a violent confrontation with community youths left two people dead.



Map of Gola forest project.  
© Conservation International

## ➤ Environmentally unfriendly

The conflict was over an allegation that the company has dispossessed community inhabitants of their land and the dangerous environmental impact of the company's indiscriminate blasting operations. The mining company has also come under scathing attacks by a coalition of civil society groups and NGOs who continue to see the activities of the company as not only environmentally unfriendly, but contest that no measures have been put in place by *Koidu Holdings* to repair damages done to the environment after the mining operations. *Koidu Holdings* is not the alone in this regard.

On the other hand, in the fight against environmental degradation the government of Sierra Leone and its development partners will need to

address local individual activities like cutting of trees for charcoal burning, unorganised 'free-for-all' illegal mining in diamondiferous areas and timber logging.

Paradoxically, all these activities are also a major means of livelihood and survival for a number of people across almost all walks of life. An extensive investigation by one of the leading national newspapers, *Awoko*, published a detailed account of youths on a mining rampage in the eastern Kono District. There were graphic pictures showcasing a depleted earth as miners dug under bridges and houses in desperation. More than 100,000 youths are merely searching the soil for their daily bread. This is how they see it. Another newspaper, *For Di People*, published a researched article naming names of senior politicians who tacitly aid and abet foreign companies in their clandestine logging activities notwithstanding the government ban. At local level, the allegation of 'conspiracy' extends to both local and traditional leaders. ■

\* Sierra Leonean journalist, Freetown  
[www.RSPB.org](http://www.RSPB.org)

### Keywords

Gibril Foday-Musa; Sierra Leone; environment; forestry; FLEGT; mining.



Free-for-all youth mining, Kaisambo, Kono 2008.  
© Awoko newspaper

# More green MEASURES

The EU has earmarked €1M for technical assistance to build up the National Commission for Environment and Forestry (NACEF), explains Matthias Reusing, head of Rural Development in the EU Delegation in Sierra Leone. It will be a focal point for all environmental policy reviews, legislation and data and incorporate environmental issues into main policy-making areas such as mining, fisheries, water, sanitation and decentralisation.

As part of the Gola Forest Programme, the country is also looking at carbon trading. One possibility is Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. This is aimed at setting up Certified Emission Reduction (CER) credits to developing nations to cut back emissions. Sierra Leone is not currently a Kyoto signatory, but might look at voluntary carbon markets which sell activities that reduce greenhouse gases to companies or individuals who want to reduce their carbon footprints, explains Reusing.

Sierra Leone is also included in a study of DG Development due to be launched in Spring 2008 on legal and illegal cross-border trade of timber and forest products in West Africa. The government recently showed interest in a voluntary partnership agreement under the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) to clamp down on illegal logging\*. D.P. ■

\* FLEGT agreements are voluntary licensing schemes with partner countries ensuring that only legal timber from partner countries can enter the EU.

# EU funding to UNDERPIN STABILITY

*Funding for Sierra Leone under the six-year 10th European Development Fund (EDF) (2008-2013) will build on projects to underpin stability and good governance and help get the economy moving.*

There are €242M in the 10th EDF's 'A' envelope focusing on good governance (€37M), rehabilitation of priority infrastructure (€95M) and general budget support (€90M). Outside the focal sectors, funds are earmarked for agriculture (€12M – see article on agriculture); trade, which includes funding to underpin an eventual European Partnership Agreement (€3M); a technical and cooperation facility (€2.5M); and contribution to regional projects (€2M).

An additional €26.4M – initially for two years but renewable – is contained within a 'B' envelope. This covers unforeseen needs such as emergency assistance, a contribution to internationally agreed debt relief and adverse effects of instability in export earnings.

EDF monies to Sierra Leone have increased since 1975 when the 4th EDF was on stream. War interrupted planning, so €100M from previous funds is still being spent. Between 1999 and 2002 the EC's humanitarian aid office, ECHO, pledged €44M for war victims, returnees and Liberian refugees.

Sierra Leone is one of only a handful of ACP countries where the EU is jointly planning its aid strategy with an EU Member State, the



9th EDF-funded road renovation, Masiaka-Bo 2008. © Debra Percival

UK's Department for International Development (DFID). "There is huge complementarity between DFID, which concentrates on health and sanitation, and the EU with its focus on transport and infrastructure," Richard Hogg, head of DFID's office in Sierra Leone, told us.

Both donors also provide budget support. Under the 10th EDF, €15M has been pledged per year, amounting to 29 per cent of the total budget support by donors, or 5 per cent of total government revenue. Benchmarks for disbursement of these monies are drawn up with the AFDB, World Bank, DFID and include good public financial management.

Of the €95M going to infrastructure under the 10th EDF, €48M is for feeder roads, €15M for overlaying the Songo-Moyamba junction road and €7M for construction of the Magbele bridge. Currently being upgraded with EDF funds are a 86 km stretch from Rogbere junction in Sierra Leone to Guinea and the 168 km from Masiaka to Bo. Continuation of this road to Liberia is seen as a funding priority since it would create a trade-enhancing artery from Liberia to Guinea.

Also included in the budget chapter for infrastructure are funds for the vital energy sector (€12M), a 'master plan' for Freetown (€8M) – including development of urban roads and markets – and the development of river transport (€2M) including the building of jetties at points on the 380 km of inland waterways. There is a support for the Ministry of Transport (€3M).

Out of €37M earmarked for good governance, explained Francesca Varlese, Project Manager at the EU Delegation in Freetown, €8M will go toward continued election support, including €3.7M for the holding of the July local elections and to election bodies – the National Electoral Commission and Political Parties Registration Commission. Chiara Bellini of the Delegation's governance section adds that reform of the civil service (€10M), and decentralisation of services (€9M) are also priorities. Additionally, there is continued funding for the National Authorising Office which coordinates EU projects for the government (€5M), sums for environmental governance (€4M) and the building up of civil society (€1M). **D.P.** ■

**Keywords**

Debra Percival; Sierra Leone; 10th EDF; Infrastructure.

# Is TOURISM a STIRRING LION?

*Long stretches of white sand, intimate coves, beachside bars, barracuda straight from the sea and a laid back feel. It's a far cry from the war torn label that has stuck for a decade and the government is keen to tear off for good.*

Nature's abundance of intense green foliage contrasting with the deep red earth and sheltering a wealth of fauna and flora is both humbling and enveloping. The government knows that by nurturing such natural assets it can pull tourists back to the country (see environment article).

Sierra Leone's Tourism Minister, Hindolo Tyre, who has a small office tucked into the national sports stadium, says the sector will not be sidelined: "There has always been a tourism ministry but it has always been looked upon as the forgotten ministry. In fact, there was a joke that when a minister does something wrong he is usually punished by being sent to tourism. For me, it's not a punishment it's a challenge. People can't count on mining forever."

It's only a six hour flight from Europe but there's a lot to tackle to turn around the external perception of the country. On sandy beach terms, the country can compete with Gambia and Senegal with hidden bays like Sussex and River no.2, as well as the long stretch at Lumley. It's a different case with infrastructure. Flights to Sierra Leone are comparatively high-cost and the position of the national airport at Lungi on a peninsula means an extra unique helicopter hop into Freetown on arrival. At the time of writing there was no alternative sea transport to the capital.

**> Clean-up day**

Other things that put off some tourists: visible destitution, a largely cash economy and environmental problems such as waste – mainly plastics – washed up on Lumley beach. The last Saturday of every month has

been declared environmental 'clean-up day' by the government when there's no traffic on the streets and you are expected to stay at home to tidy your area.

"The sector can become a major foreign exchange earner and an employment generator. To say that we are war torn is not right. What we need is to market and promote our country outside as well as inside," said the Minister.

For starters, the Minister wants to print a map pinpointing the country's beauty spots, historical sites and relics. He talks about some spots: Bumbuna's amazing scenery and very nice guest rooms and Tiwai Island, a stunning nature reserve.

Old colonial houses with ornate verandas give a bygone time feel to Freetown. And the cotton tree – an immense tree found growing in the late 18th century by former American slaves who won their freedom by fighting for the British in the American Civil War and named their new settlement Freetown – is a focal point in the capital.

"Part of our strategic plan involves having legal consultants even just for short periods of three months to look at rules and regulations; for example, the Tourism Development Master Plan in 1982. The Monuments and Relics Act was as far back as 1957. Even some of our agreements with hotels are not pro-Sierra Leone," said Minister Tyre.

He said external investment was vital since domestic priorities are electricity, food and water: "When you look at the country it's like a virgin untouched by investment and investors, but the approach we want to use is totally different. One of the failures of the system before is political interference. We want to de-politicise as much as possible."

**D.P.** ■

Website: [www.sierraleone.org](http://www.sierraleone.org)

**Keywords**

Debra Percival; Sierra Leone; Tourism Environment ; Heritage.



Long sandy stretch, Lumley beach 2008. © Debra Percival

# CYPRUS and MALTA

*In this issue, The Courier highlights exceptionally two European Union countries – Cyprus and Malta – to mark their entry into the eurozone. On 1 January this year both adopted the euro.*

*Malta and Cyprus also have a lot in common, starting with their small but open, flourishing and sound economies that enabled them to quickly fulfil the EU's convergence criteria, notably relating to growth, inflation rates and the government debt. The two countries joined the European Exchange Rate Mechanism on 2 May 2005. On 16 May 2007, the European Commission and European Central Bank gave them the green light to join the eurozone, a decision formalised at the 11 July Council. Both countries had a strong and stable currency at the time, the Cypriot pound (€1 = CYP0.5853) and the Maltese lira (€1 = MTL0.4293).*

*Cyprus and Malta are also old European countries, lying on the fringes of the continent and with a long history of being permeable to the territories and culture of Africa and the Orient.*

# CYPRUS a meeting and mixing of cultures

*It is probably its long history as a place where cultures meet and mix that gave the people of Cyprus their dynamism and charm, including a touching hospitality, but above all an eagerness to strike up a conversation, rare in a country suffering under partial occupation. The most recent political developments perhaps herald an end to this tragedy.*

**T**he history of Cyprus goes back a long way, with traces of human settlement discovered on the island as early as the 9th Millennium BC. Six thousand years later, people had developed now mastering the techniques of copper working. Cyprus in fact lent its Latin name (*cuprum*) to this metal. But the real foundations of Cyprus were laid with the arrival in around 1200 BC of the Mycenaean Greeks who brought their language, culture and skills. Greek culture was to continue to dominate the island, albeit with ups and downs.

Quickly developing into a centre of Greek culture, Cyprus mixed the heritage of the motherland with inputs from many other cultures, all of them still present today in this melting pot of a country. Another major contribution came with the arrival of the Phoenicians in the 9th century BC, after being driven from their land (present-day Lebanon) by the Assyrians. This period brought a new flourishing of culture notably through excellence in creating ceramics and fine jewellery, appreciated on Cyprus to this day. A succession of conquerors followed, with the Assyrians in the 8th century BC and the Egyptians in the 6th. The Persians arrived in 525 BC and held the land in an iron grip. This lasted until the victory of Alexander the Great in 333 BC, marking the official entry of Cyprus into its Hellenic era, which con-



Abandoned house close to the demarcation zone, Nicosia, 2008. © Hegel Goutier

tinued until 30 BC and the beginning of the Roman period that ended in 330 AD. The country then became a province of Byzantium and remained so for nine centuries, despite successive Arab raids. This period infused Cyprus very markedly with the culture of this Eastern Roman Empire. The Cypriot Orthodox Church became autocephalous at the end of the 5th century, thus appointing its own head.

Richard 1st (the Lionheart) seized the island at the end of the 12th century, ceding it to the Knights Templar whose regressive and dictatorial reign was followed by Venetian domination in 1489 and Ottoman occupation in 1570. This lasted until 1878 when Cyprus, which was still in theory part of the Ottoman Empire, was ceded to British administration in exchange for protection against the Russian threat.

## > One of the 20th century's tragedies

In 1914, as a reprisal measure for Turkey aligning with Germany, Great Britain annexed Cyprus. The country officially became a British colony in 1925. The annexation was relatively well accepted as supporters of the first *enosis* (union with Greece), who made up the majority of the population and saw it as a timely opportunity. Disappointment was to follow and uprisings which were quickly quelled. After the Second World War, there was no recompense for the Greek Cypriots who had enlisted in large numbers (60,000) alongside the British troops.

In 1955, they embarked on an armed struggle. Thanks to US intervention, in 1959 the Greek and Turkish leaders reached an agreement on the terms of independence for Cyprus that ruled out any union with Greece and any par-

titution of the country. A right of veto was granted to the Turkish Cypriot minority (about 20 per cent of the population) on a number of sensitive issues, as well as a guaranteed 30 per cent representation in the civil service. A final agreement was reached between the two parties and Great Britain. The agreement *inter alia* permitted Great Britain to retain its military bases on the island, which became independent on 16 August 1960. Its first president was Archbishop Makarios, one of the great non-aligned leaders of the Third World.

## > Partition

The most determined members of the two communities were dissatisfied with the independence agreements and successive clashes prompted the UN Security Council to send a peacekeeping force to the island in 1964. The island's partition had already begun when Turkish Cypriot ministers were resigning from the government and fellow members of their community were increasingly moving to the north of the island.

The military junta that had seized power in Greece in 1967 helped fuel a coup against President Makarios. In response to this and in the absence of any reaction from the third power guaranteeing the independence, i.e. Great Britain, Turkey seized the occasion to send in its army on 20 July 1974.

It was soon to occupy 35 per cent of the territory, representing what was the most economically developed part of Cyprus at the time, with an economic potential estimated to be 70 per cent. A line of demarcation was traced that ran right through the city of Nicosia. Today this remains the world's only divided capital. About 140,000 Greek Cypriots, a quarter of

the island's population, were forced to abandon their homes and flee to the south. About 1,500 also disappeared. Only a few hundred Greek Cypriots and Maronites remained in the north.

## > Hope reborn

It took the population of the Republic of Cyprus just 20 years to rebuild their economy and regain past splendours, to such a degree that Cyprus was able to meet the criteria for EU membership. For the European bodies, this accession implied prior reunification of the island in accordance with the UN's Annan Plan that was to be adopted by a referendum held simultaneously in both parts of the island. Whereas it won 65 per cent of the votes in the 'occupied' part of the island, it was rejected by 76 per cent of the Greek Cypriots, thereby closing the door on Europe for northern Cyprus. This was a rude awakening for the European institutions and caused resentment among the Turkish Cypriots. However, the reality was much more complex. Despite the intent it did not seem that the Greek Cypriots were seeking revenge but simply regarded the Annan Plan as unbalanced with too many constraints for them and too many prerogatives for the Turkish Cypriots, if not for Turkey itself.

The election as president of Dimitris Christofias, the AKEL (Communist Party of Cyprus) candidate on 24 February this year, shows clearly that the Greek Cypriots had no desire to prolong the disagreement. The amended corrections to the Annan Plan requested by Christofias earned him the support of the principal election loser, former President Papadopoulos. He had been eliminated in the first round despite his economic and social successes, a fact which seemed to reflect that his uncompromising opposition to the Annan Plan was not widely supported.

Dialogue resumed immediately following the election of Dimitris Christofias who entered into negotiations with Mehmet Ali Talat, President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (a state not recognised by the international community). The first symbol of these thawed relations was the opening of a Ledra Street crossing point in the demarcation line. Ledra was the original name of Cyprus.

H.G. ■

### Keywords

Cyprus, history, Greece, Turkey, Demetris Christofias, Ledra, Hegel Goutier.



# Economic MIRACLE

One of the surprising things about Cyprus is its high level of economic development. Everything is new. Nicosia is sparkling. Its shopping and business districts can rival in size and luxury those of the world's richest cities. Jewellers, luxury boutiques, banks and the offices of major companies are everywhere. In the southern section of Nicosia, that is. Although not without its charms, the north of the city that lies in the occupied zone has a feel of abandon.

Before 1974, almost three-quarters of economic activity were concentrated in the north of the country. The occupation caused 40 per cent of the population to take to the roads, residing in makeshift shelters. The economy was in free-fall. Yet in less than 15 years Cyprus was a nation rebuilt.

Marios Tsiakkis, Director of Industry Department at the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, says this 'Cypriot miracle' is due to a determination by all sections of the population. He speaks emotionally of how the trade unions spontaneously appealed for a cut in wages as their contribution to the reconstruction effort.

By 1990, the feat was achieved. Today, considers Mr. Tsiakkis, Cyprus is facing another challenge: that of competitiveness – on the one hand from Europe and on the other from China and other Asian countries. Agriculture currently accounts for 3.5 per cent of the economy, manufacturing industries 10 per cent and services 74 per cent. "We must evolve further towards a knowledge-based industrial economy with high added values. We are encouraging Cypriot companies to invest in research and development projects and innovation. The Chamber of Commerce is working with the Public University of Cyprus. It has set itself

the task of acting as a catalyst between the university and enterprise."

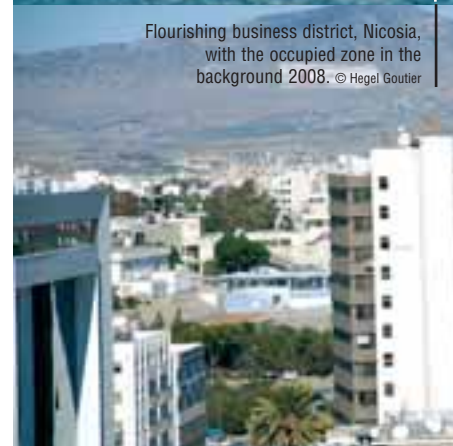
Of the 74 per cent share of the economy represented by services, tourism accounts for 20 per cent. Other important branches are financial services, shipping, the booming construction industry, and the accounting and audit services used by many major international companies.

At 10 per cent, the low level of corporate tax is a big investment draw. What's more, Cyprus has sealed agreements with about 40 countries around the world to avoid double taxation. Last but not least, wages in Cyprus are lower than in most EU countries (about 84 per cent of the EU average). The quality of the roads and communication systems, the commonplace use of English, the advanced education and health systems, and a good social environment combine to secure the country's excellent reputation among foreign investors. And don't forget, insists Tsiakkis, the security, an agreeable climate and the beauty of Cyprus.

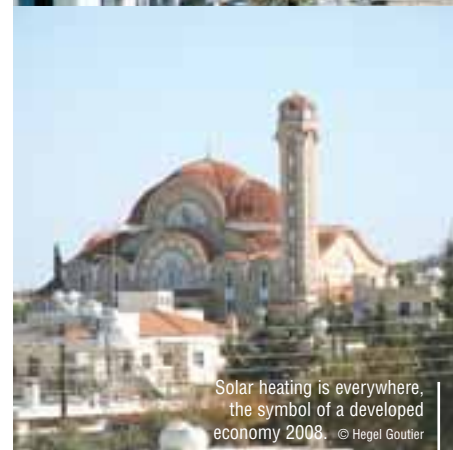
Cyprus's attraction for foreign investors and residents was very evident in the property boom. This explains why, within business circles that generally favour reunification, members of the construction sector are especially supportive. They are already looking ahead to the billions of euros that would flow into the



Port of Paphos 2008. © Hegel Goutier



Flourishing business district, Nicosia, with the occupied zone in the background 2008. © Hegel Goutier



Solar heating is everywhere, the symbol of a developed economy 2008. © Hegel Goutier

north of the country in the wake of reunification. H.G. ■

### Keywords

Cyprus, economy, Marios Tsiakkis, investments, Emmanuela Lambrianides, Georges Virides, Hegel Goutier.

# THE PLANNING BUREAU architect of the economic miracle at the service of development

To set up its development policy, Cyprus has mobilised both its development department in its Foreign Affairs Ministry and the Planning Bureau of the government whose task was to reconstruct the country's economy in the wake of the Turkish invasion of the island.



Emmanuela Lambrianides, Senior Coordination Officer, Planning Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs © Hegel Goutier

Emmanuela Lambrianides, Senior Coordination Officer, Planning Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs\*

### Initial phase: Sub-contracting project implementation

In 2007, the percentage of the GDP of Cyprus allocated to development policy reached 0.12 per cent. The target is for 0.17 per cent by 2010 in line with commitments made in the EU Council.

Our strategy is to delegate implementation of our cooperation to other EU Member States. This is not only because we don't have enough local experts but also for efficiency – why spend a lot of money on building up a big administration to deliver assistance when we can use what's

already there. Our main partners are Lesotho and Mali among the ACP countries and four countries in our vicinity in North Africa and the Middle East.\*\* Smaller amounts of aid go to ten other recipients.

### Second phase: CyprusAid start-up

Our sectors of concentration are health and education. We have comparative advantages in these areas and want to use our skills. We have set up custom-made courses on agriculture – short-term courses of around six weeks covering research.

After the first phase we can manage things ourselves, but we also work through NGOs. We are presently working with them to pre-empt what we can do on our own after 2010 at the closure of the medium-term strategy (2007–2010). We also have to set up the decision-making mechanism to establish 'CyprusAid', fostering closer links with the beneficiary countries and developing links with our NGOs.

We are also working on shipping and banking where we have received requests for short-term training. Another area is economic planning. We have some experience in this as the economy of Cyprus was itself completely dis-

mantled. Cyprus had to take many planning initiatives and the role of the Bureau was instrumental. It created a five-year plan and instructed the private sector. We brought about a complete recovery of the economy after just 15 years – a fact the Planning Bureau is proud of.

Georges Virides, Director of Developmental Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, Ministry of Foreign Affairs\*

### ACP beneficiaries

There are three projects we have been involved with. One is in Lesotho where a boarding house was constructed for girls in the district of Mokhotlong. The girls residing in the nearby area had had to travel a distance of eight kilometres each day on foot to go to school, facing the danger of being attacked by people with firearms. This project was undertaken in partnership with Irish Aid and the implementing agency was the Ministry of Education of Lesotho on the basis of an agreement between Ireland and Lesotho. The total cost of the project was €350,000.

In Mali we have completed a project on sustainable waste management in the town of Sikasso in partnership with the government

of Belgium and Mali. The implementing agency was Belgian Technical Cooperation. The town of Sikasso faced major public health problems with increasing production of all sorts of waste, mainly industrial. The total contribution was €151,000 and equipment was delivered at the end of 2006.

Now we are in the process of another project with the government of Mali. This time we will construct four small bridges which will provide access to villages in case people are cut off when there is rain. H.G. ■

\* Based on interviews by Hegel Goutier

\*\* Egypt, Yemen, the Lebanon and the autonomous Palestinian Territories are all beneficiaries.

### Keywords

Cyprus; economic; Emmanuela Lambrianides; Georges Virides; development; policy; NGO; Hegel Goutier.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nicosia 2008. © Hegel Goutier



# CYPRriot identities

> **Neshe Yasin**  
POET, FEMALE, TURKISH CYPRIOT\*

There is confusion over identity in Cyprus. There are vertical and horizontal definitions. There are religions: Christian and Muslim. And then there are nationalities: Turkish and Greek. The British asked people to define themselves. Some of the so-called Turkish Cypriots were black Africans, others probably Turkmen rebels brought here who adopted the Muslim religion.

In this country you can introduce yourself as Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, Cypriot, Greek, and Greek Cypriot. The way you define yourself is linked to your political perspective on the future. As a Greek person, you might be perceived as right wing. If you say Cypriot, you probably lean towards the left. Greek Cypriot or Turkish Cypriot means in the middle. But how much Cypriot and how much Greek or Turkish do you actually mean?

Cypriot identity also means being committed to a geographical project of unity, or not. As an island, Cyprus has no other boarder than the sea. And all Cypriots like the shape of the country. Its form is copied in lapel pins and jewels. We keep the place where we lived in our memory but a lot of us were forced to forget this memory.

Identity is always expecting something. I am a poet. Some poets are looking for hybridity and consider that Cypriot is a hybridity. In languages, you find the same music. Words are even sometimes shared. You will find Italian words in all of our languages and similarly in the mind and character. We have the same memory. The way of thinking is quite similar. The family structure is quite similar, and the way people talk, the excitement.

In the villages, you have to help each other to survive. For example, on Turkish religious days, you used to give an animal to a Greek Cypriot to take care of and vice versa. All this came to an end with the conflict over nationality...

> **Giorgos Moleskis**  
POET, MALE, GREEK CYPRIOT\*

There are so many identities in Cyprus. There are several religions: Greek orthodox, Muslim, Maronite, Armenian Christian and Roman Catholic. Linguistically speaking, all Christians were assimilated into the Greek language.

The Roman Catholics are linked to the Maronites from Lebanon. The Maronites use the Greek language but they have also kept their Maronite dialect which is spoken in some Cypriot villages. This language is mixed with Greek words, as well as with Turkish and Arabic.

My wife is Armenian, from Yerevan. The Armenians have a publication in Armenian and English. From 1996, each citizen has had to specify his or her religion.

The perception of a Greek Cypriot or a Turkish Cypriot is not important. If you use a language, you use a culture. Greek culture for one and Turkish culture for the other. But everyone is part of the story. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots lived for centuries in the same village. One shepherd looked after their flocks. They shared everything, the land and the shepherd. As a student I remember visiting parents of a friend of mine. Greeks and Turkish were together sharing everything: land, cattle, playing in the same neighbourhood. The folk music, the folk dancing, the food were the same. The same friendship, the same hospitality, the way they cultivated their land. Everything was the same.

A part of identity is language, culture and tradition. But another part is everyday life. **H.G.** ■

\* Based on interviews by Hegel Goutier.

**Keywords**

Neshe Yasin, Giorgos Moleskis, Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot, Hegel Goutier.

# STELIOS IERONIMIDIS

## Deputy Mayor of Nicosia

Interview by Hegel Goutier

*How would you attract someone to Nicosia?*

If we're talking about doing business, Cyprus has always been a centre of services and used to be a business centre, even prior to accession to the EU. We have a flourishing offshore industry.

Now, following EU membership, we have the lowest corporate taxes in the EU so many people from both within and outside the EU want to set up business here. The majority of business activities take place here, in Nicosia.

*Nicosia is little known to many people.*

Nicosia is the English version of *Lefkosia*, meaning 'white city'. *Lefko* means white. *Bel* also means white in the Slavic language so Belgrade also means 'white city'.

Why Lefkosia? Because of the bright weather and white colours that dominate the buildings. But it is not only the weather that is good all year round. There are historical monuments. It is very easy to travel around Cyprus as it is small. The history of Cyprus dates back to the Stone Age. You can see settlements of the Stone Age people, as well as historic monuments that show the evolution of civilisation in the Middle East – the Phoenicians, Egyptians and Babylonians. This makes the country quite interesting from an archaeological viewpoint and Nicosia has a very interesting museum for anybody that wants to know more about how history has evolved, not only for Cyprus, but also for the whole of the region.

Even though there's a Christian majority, there are many Muslim citizens and we have mosques and churches side-by-side. The surrounding medieval walls were built by the Italians when Cyprus was occupied by the

Venetians and these are illuminated during the night. You can also come across British architecture here, dating back to their rule of the island. Not a lot of people know that the Shakespeare classic, *Othello*, was set in Cyprus. Its hero got married in Famugusta.

For visitors, there are beautiful landscapes surround Nicosia. Very close by there are high mountains. Even in this Mediterranean climate, the mountains are covered by snow for a period of five to six months. If you travel just 45 minutes from here, you will find yourself in a snow-covered landscape with more than half a metre of snow.

*How much did Nicosia suffer from the division?*

The most peculiar and sad thing about Nicosia is the division of the city itself. As you know, in 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus and took half of the land. This occupation line goes right through the heart of Nicosia and splits it in two. Nicosia is the only divided city in the world. In Jerusalem there are sectors, but there are no walls as there are here.

You feel it strongly here. If you go through the streets, especially in the built-up old town, you will always be coming up against a wall. You see empty streets that are very different to the lively streets a few metres away.

As a City Council, we try to give incentives to people living close to the division line to relocate to houses that have been deserted. This is to lessen the problems arising from desertion in the area close to the line. The municipality compulsorily acquires deserted houses and gives compensation to the owners. We then first invite the previous owners to come and live there at a very favourable rent. If they



decline, the houses are rented to others who are interested. We currently cannot meet demand with the houses that have been redone. Some eligibility criteria apply for tenants, who are usually families with a moderate income.

*How did the Turkish invasion change the soul of the city?*

The Turkish invasion forced many people into leaving their houses in the north. After 1974, the character of the outskirts of Nicosia changed with many new buildings. Some of them are not of the best quality. The city has expanded. We have made much effort to demolish part of the walls to have freer accessibility but the Turkish invasion army insists on being here, proclaiming they have protective rights over the Turkish Cypriots to keep military quarters in the heart of Nicosia. Our dream as a local authority is to see the city reunited. **H.G.** ■

**Keywords**

Stelios Ieronimidis; Nicosia; Cyprus; Famagusta; Hegel Goutier.

# THE BEAUTY AND CHARM of three continents

## Has culture overcome the checkpoints?

Two and a half million tourists visit Cyprus every year. It's an island that seems to have something for everyone. Some are attracted by the silence and serenity of the archaeological sites, others by the beautiful beaches or snow-covered summits. There are wonderful museums and other cultural attractions for art-lovers and places of fun and entertainment for partygoers. With never more than an hour's drive between the two, the island also offers a taste of exoticism, having mixed its Greek heritage with so many Oriental and even African influences. All the prestigious archaeological sites are in fact Roman and not Greek, its painting is Byzantine and its craftwork Venetian. Cyprus is in fact truly Cypriot, which is its greatest quality. Christina Mita, a professional tourist guide, sums up her country as follows: "The dance, music, and dialect are different to Greece. The Greek influence prevents Cyprus from being Oriental and the very present Orient prevents it from being 100 per cent Greek."

Since Nicosia airport closed following the occupation, the charming town of Larnaca on the southeast coast has become the country's main place of entry. It has the charm of a bygone age, in particular the old Turkish quarter offering romantic and picturesque walks along the seashore at dusk. The churches and chapels of some of the region's villages – Pyrga and Kiti for example – bear superb testimony to the passage of the kings of France.

North of Larnaca lies the formerly thriving town of Famagusta. Only a small part of its southern suburbs is under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Today it is the sleeping beauty, emptied of all its inhabitants, retained as a possible bargaining chip for a hypothetical recognition of the North by the Republic of Cyprus.

On the south coast lies Limassol, an important beach resort with its thronging crowds and nightclubs. But just outside it is the serenity of the archaeological site of the Greco-Roman city of Kourion, long coveted by Egypt (Ramses III) and which was first to become Assyrian and

then Persian. Its theatre, with the sea as a backdrop, hosts a major arts festival, and experts are continuing to unearth whole sections of the Roman city.

Between Limassol and Paphos on the coast further to the west, almost at the entrance to this most fashionable of Cypriot towns, imagination takes hold at Petra tou Romiou where Aphrodite, the goddess of love, emerged from the foam (*aphros*) of the sea. If you have any doubt about the reality of the myth, you can still see the rock that reproduces her profile and that emerged from the waves at the same time as Aphrodite herself. Further to the north, and inland, is another world. Find the calm of the monasteries in the high mountains of the Troodos which are also a destination for skiers.

### > The checkpoints as places of culture

With its archaeological sites and monasteries, the past is present everywhere on Cyprus. This is especially so in the capital, Nicosia, known as Lefkosia in Greece and as Lefkoffa in Turkish. Nicosia is probably the most relaxed divided city in history. Even as you approach the demarcation line, there is no air of tension, just a moving symbol. On the demarcation line between the checkpoint for the Republic of Cyprus and for Northern Cyprus, the UNFICYP forces are based in the Ledra Palace. Once or twice a week the Bi-communal Choir rehearses there. Made up of Greek and Turkish Cypriots, each member has to pass through the checkpoint to attend choir practice. The two choirmasters, one from each community, speak mainly in English. The choir, created in April 2003 as soon as the first crossing point was opened, gives concerts in the north and south of the island. The songs are drawn from both communities, sometimes the same song is sung in the two languages, such as *Niksarin Fidanlari*, an old Turkish melody also adopted by the Greeks. Lenia Melanidou and Costis Kyranides, the two choirmasters, recounted the long history of their choir, the only bi-community association to have lasted so long, despite the trials and tribulations.

Nicosia is home to a rich patrimony, such as the unique Museum of Byzantine Art. Many cultural associations and foundations, such as the Symphony Orchestra Foundation, popularise the culture. The northern part of Nicosia also has much to offer. Of particular note is the cathedral of Ste. Sophie transformed into a mosque. Theatres, concert halls, cinemas and festivals covering all fields of international art and culture combine to make the island a treasure for art-lovers and tourists alike.

H.G. ■

### Keywords

Cyprus; tourism; culture; Nicosia; byzantine; Larnaka; Aphrodite; Hegel Goutier.

On the right  
The Rock of Aphrodite. © EC

Below  
'No boarder Underwear.' Store close to the demarcation line 2008. © Hegel Goutier/Overcoming the checkpoints.

Bottom left  
Dyonisos House, Paphos 2008. © Hegel Goutier

Bottom right  
Paphos Medieval castle and marina 2008. © Hegel Goutier



# AS IF MALTA was master of its own history

*Malta has known seven thousand years of integration rather than occupation, of adaptation rather than revolt or revolution. Malta has always been an inherent part of the empires that annexed it. Then in the early 19th century it joined the British Empire – this time at Malta’s own request – before peacefully negotiating its independence in 1964. This was an exception to the turmoil of decolonisation. As if Malta was master of its own history.*

**T**he very first inhabitants most probably arrived during the 7th Millennium BC and immigrants arrived from Sicily during the 5th Millennium. The megalithic temples and hypogeums bear testimony to the most ancient of cultures including the remarkable underground temple at Hal Saflieni, recognised as a world heritage site – were built between the 4th and 3rd Millennia BC. It was the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians who next left their indelible mark on the island’s culture - from 700 to 218 AD, the year Malta became part of the Roman Empire. By this time, the Carthaginians had already developed shipbuilding there.

## > Early conversion to Christianity

At the dawn of the Christian era, in the year 60, a ship carrying the future St. Paul (who was on his way to Rome where he was to be put on trial) ran aground on the island, the event becoming a key moment in the country’s history - its conversion to Christianity and its Latinisation.

After Rome, the Byzantine administration took office in 395 AD until the invasion by the Aghlabids in 870 AD. The latter remained for two centuries, at a time when the Arabs also ruled in Sicily, Gibraltar and Spain.

## > From the Arab world to the Sicilian Vespers

Malta was steeped in the history of two centuries of Arab occupation. North African Arabic was to form the basis of the Maltese language. The Arabs were followed by a succession of conquerors for most of the next five centuries. First were the Normans from Sicily who exploited the divisions between Muslim countries, many of which were also bogged down in war with the Byzantine Empire. In 1090 they absorbed Malta, but without driving out the Arabs. The island, by now home to Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities, became a stopping off point for pilgrims and crusaders.

For four centuries Malta was to remain within Sicily’s fold and subject to its vagaries. In 1130 Sicily became an autonomous kingdom, when it fell firstly under the authority of German King and Roman Emperor Frederic II (1194) and then under the French Emperor Charles of Anjou (1266). The French were driven out in 1282 by the Sicilian Vespers and Sicily pledged obedience to the Kingdom of Aragon, fully becoming part of the Crown of Aragon in 1409. From the beginning of the Sicilian period, Christianity was returned to Malta with the adoption of the Italian language

by the nobility. Finally, in 1479, with its destiny still linked to Sicily, Malta came under the control of the Catholic Kings of Spain who allowed feudal fiefdoms to develop there that took part in piracy and smuggling.

## > The Order takes hold

At the beginning of the 16th century, the Ottoman troops of Soliman the Magnificent conquered the Greek island of Rhodes, threatening Sicily that was part of the kingdom of



Valletta Grandmasters Palace, 2008. © Hegel Goutier



Valletta Grandmasters Palace (interior) 2008. © Hegel Goutier  
At first, the Knights of the order had little interest in settling in Malta.

Charles V at the time. The latter firstly appealed to the Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem to block the Muslim offensive in Malta and finally ceded the island to them in 1530. At first the Knights of the Order had little interest in settling on this arid land, its declining population consisting now of little more than the old nobility of Mdina who were descendants of the Normans of Sicily.

After losing Tripoli, the Order won the battle of Malta against the Turks in 1565. With this victory the Christians had completed their recapture of the European Mediterranean. At this time a new capital city was built – Valletta, a fortification town whose construction began in 1566. During this time, naval battles flared between the Turks and the galleys of the Order. The knights eventually transformed Malta into a huge European naval school that supplied sailors to France. This was to transform Malta into a massive European naval school providing sailors to France who in 1765 made the island its protectorate.

The Order found itself stripped of all its assets by 1792 having backed the French King Louis XIV against the revolution of 1789. In response, the Order elected a German knight as its head. Then in 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte and his fleet of 300 ships conquered Malta without a shot being fired. Bonaparte seized the Order’s treasury and continued on to Egypt, but the garrison he left behind incurred the wrath of the population due to its harassment of the island’s churchmen. Finally the

French garrison capitulated, assieged by the British in 1800. No longer wanting the government of the Grand Master, in 1882 the Maltese asked to come under British rule, requesting nothing other than the guarantee that they could retain their constitution and Roman Catholic religion. The agreement between Malta and Great Britain was ratified by the Treaty of Paris in 1814.

After a difficult period – mainly due to successive outbreaks of plague and cholera – Malta entered a period of relative prosperity during the second half of the century due to its coal ports and geographic location close to the newly constructed Suez Canal. In particular it would be shaken by a language dispute between the partisans of Italian and English, fuelled by the first stirrings of a desire for national independence. Initially calmed by a number of concessions, demands for autonomy resurfaced in the climate of economic recession at the end of the First World War. The British Administration reacted to this with a series of policy changes - one of these concessions was to give recognition of Maltese as the official language of the island from 1934. The Second World War strengthened the bonds between the British and Maltese and to resist invasion attempts by the Germans, the fortress island was transformed into a defensive bunker. Everything was converted into a shelter against attack, including the Neolithic caves and the catacombs. At the outbreak of war, Malta (less than 250 km<sup>2</sup> for the main island, and just over 300 km<sup>2</sup> when Gozo and Comino are included) was subjected to around 2,500 air raids in just two years resulting in the

destruction of 40,000 homes and 2,000 deaths. The summer of 1942 saw 154 days (and nights) of continual bombardment on Malta (compared to 56 on London). 6,500 tonnes of bombs fell on Valetta harbour alone (compared to 260 tonnes dropped on Coventry). The country was decorated with the George Cross for its heroism. At independence, the Maltese included this symbol of courage as part of their flag.

Malta, the heroic, was granted self-government in 1947. However, the Nationalist Party, unlike its Liberal rival, was not satisfied and when it came to power in 1962, its leader – Gorg Borg Olivier – immediately demanded full independence. This finally became a reality on September 21, 1964.

After being elected to power in 1974, the Labour Party pushed through a republican constitution in the same year and the closure of the British military base on the island. This government, headed by Dom Mintoff, was also notable for adopting a Third World stance and a position of neutrality in the face of the two major world power blocs.

The Nationalist Party was returned to power in 1984, this time led by Eddie Fenech Adami, who served as prime minister until 1996. During this period, the long-banned Order of Malta was once again recognised. Moreover, Adami’s economic policy marked a break with the socialist tendencies of his predecessor, while remaining loyal to the pledge of neutrality on international issues. In 1992, Adami opened negotiations with Brussels with a view to Malta joining the European Union. However, the introduction of VAT cost him the 1996 elections. Labour was then returned to power, led by Alfred Santz. This government lasted just two years following the outcry surrounding its decision to freeze negotiations on EU membership.

When the Nationalists won the 1998 elections, Eddie Fenech Adami reopened the EU accession process in 2000, culminating in membership for Malta on 1 January 2004. The Nationalist Party went on to win the subsequent elections the most recent on 8 March 2008. **H.G. ■**

### Keywords

Malta, history, megalithic, hypogeum, Knights, Hegel Goutier.

The soul of Malta



Oliver Friggieri.  
© Hegel Goutier

# OPENING and CLOSING

*Because it is small, Malta has always been a part of larger empires. It opens up to the world so as to better concentrate on its security. "Malta is at the edge, a periphery to itself." Divided on everything, it somehow always manages to reach national consensus. That, at least, is the analysis of Oliver Friggieri\*, professor of literature, poet and literary critic.*

**F**riggieri's work revolves around the problem of belonging to a nation – an island – that lies close to Africa and Southern Europe, with a mixed Latin and Semitic culture alongside other influences. His view is that, "I don't write about Malta but about a human being." Friggieri has published a considerable number of books, poems, novels and essays that have been translated into many languages. All of his books explore this tiny island which is an obsession, Malta and its multiculturalism.

> **Constant duality**

"The Malta I grew up in is completely different from the Malta of today," he explains. Today the island resembles a town. At the centre of the village there a church used to stand and opposite, a square (misra), then houses and beyond these, fields. The church at the centre was a symbol of power and culture. Huge churches, "because we are small". Beyond that, there lay yet another village with the same design. And then it these villages fused together and interlocked. But inspite of

everything, the nation retained its identity. Malta is a nation where everybody lives in close proximity to everybody else. The 'misra' underwent a change. Nowadays, the capital, Valletta, is deserted after six in the evening. The centre is no longer there. Today, people prefer to go out in St Julians with its diverse entertainment and leisure facilities.

The basis of the Maltese nation's culture is Christianity and language; within each of which there lies a duality. For example, that of the magnificence of St John's Cathedral in Valletta on the one hand and the small village churches on the other.

An important characteristic of the country is that it has always been on the side of major powers. With Napoleon when he was at his strongest (between 1798 and 1800) and afterwards with the English, alongside Nelson and Alexander. "Malta was always part of a big empire and now Malta is in the EU...We tend to exaggerate: the biggest, the strongest, and the greatest," says Friggieri.



But feelings are still divided, smiles Friggieri, especially at a football match when Italy plays England: "It's deeper than just sport. It's older than that. It is something to do with the image of the father. Our identity precedes us. Islands mean tradition, identity, and resistance to change." Malta is thus very much an island but one that has absorbed a great deal from the large countries that surround it. It has adopted, compared, and modified a great many things to suit its needs.

> **Arabic language for a European people**

Maltese is without doubt a Semitic language and to be precise, has an Arabic structure. In fact, Malta has almost always been exposed to the arrival of populations from the North, yet paradoxically it is Africa and the Middle East that gave it its language, the basis of its architecture and so many other aspects of its culture.

> **Membership of the European Union**

Friggieri believes that Malta has a sense of security and self-sufficiency. Coupled with this is the search for the father as protector. "So, there is a government and there is Brussels which brings an international identity." But, he adds, many feel that Brussels is very distant. "Why should I care about it?" The local media speak very little about Europe except when giving practical information, the rate of the euro or major political events. "Malta is an outer edge, a periphery to itself, on the edge of itself," he concludes. **H.G.** ■

\* Oliver Friggieri is a professor of Maltese and comparative literature at the University of Malta. His books have been translated into many languages and his poems are included in several international anthologies. His works have won many prestigious literary prizes all over the world. He is also the composer of a number of musical works and presents cultural programmes on TV and radio (see, for example, The International Who's Who 2007, London).

Again he takes the example of St John's Cathedral and the sense of duality and ambiguity. "From the front, it looks like a garage. And the interior looks like a theatre. They always want to portray the image of the importance of Malta."

> **Divisions and consensus**

On Malta, public opinion is always initially divided. For example, on EU membership, one of the two big parties, the Labour party was in favour of a partnership, but not full membership, while the Liberals advocated the latter. A referendum was held that produced a clear vote in favour of membership, which the socialists accepted. "That's Malta," says Friggieri, "first it divides and then it comes together. But the national consensus is strong." A dividing line runs through this large island, with the more liberal North and more conservative South. "We don't agree on everything but we need the coming together to survive. And when the next challenge comes along, we divide again and then come together again. Always a boxing session, then peace and then boxing again," he says.

But this ambiguity reflects a profound truth, that of the wholeness of Malta: "Very small but complete, like a small insect with a whole organism, not half a nation." The country's political vision is like the Maltese soul. "There is a sense of attachment to the inner

circle, to the parish, to the party. Who are you? Where are you from? Sect, cast, regions, social groups, these are all important in Malta. So our psychology is older than we are," he continues.

The Maltese have defined their identity in terms of land and sea. A map of the country shows a small island surrounded by forts. They are always thinking of a possible invader, with a fear of being attacked. Says Friggieri: "Valletta is a fortress. The city can be locked. Wherever you are in Malta, you have those inside and those outside. Who are you? Where do you come from? The people of Malta harbour the memory of being persecuted in Rhodes."

About 100 years ago the divide was on linguistic issues. Should the language be Italian, the language of tradition, or English, the language of power? The question resurfaced, albeit with less passion force, at the time of independence. In the meantime there was the Second World War during which Malta lent considerable support to allied troops, and the recognition shown by England in awarding it the George Cross medal (the only time a place has received such an honour). English had naturally come to be established as the second official language, Maltese being, in addition, the national language.

**Keywords**

**Oliver Friggieri, misra, Malta, Malti, Valletta, Hegel Goutier.**

Economic overview of Malta

# A smart economy with no fear of GLOBALISATION

Based on interview with Kevin J. Borg, Director General of the Maltese Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise

By Hegel Goutier

Malta gained its independence in 1964. From 1964-1979 it still had a lot of support from UK which had military bases on the island. From 1979, Malta became economically self-sufficient. In the private sector, the government identified two up-and-coming sectors; manufacturing and tourism.

## > Building a dynamic manufacturing industry

The government created the *Malta Development Cooperation* whose role was to attract foreign investment. At that time, wages and the standard of living were low. Institutions such as the Chamber of Commerce were on the Board of MDC but it was the government that took a prominent role. Companies interested in diverse sectors: clothing, textile, spare parts for car, etc., came from the UK, Germany and the US.

The government has also given incentives (subsidies, rent facilities, and other kinds of support) to encourage investment. In the

tourism sector, the government subsidised the building of hotels and resorts by investors and gave concessions of land and beaches. In the 70's, the government set up 'Air Malta' whose primary purpose was to promote tourism.

Malta also relied on its people. We were hard working, spoke English, and could be trained by foreigners. By the late 90's, Malta's standard of living had considerably increased. In the beginning, jobs were not created very quickly in the private sector, but by the public sector; police, land revenue, etc. There were many national monopolies at the time: electricity, telephone, TV stations and *Air Malta*. They all belong to the government. Unemployment was never high in Malta. You either worked with the government or services or were self-employed. By the late 90's, we reached today's level and the standard of living and salaries went up. At the same time competition for investment from Eastern Europe China surfaced. We were always prepared for this. In 2004, Malta joined the EU and was eligible for certain funding. With this aid, Malta was able to train its people, espe-

cially in IT, and we were able to build infrastructure, roads, develop fibre-optics, establish internet connections and modernise the airport. The economy has changed, becoming less dependant on manufacturing and more so on services.

Some factories have uprooted to Tunisia and elsewhere but they still belong to the Maltese. Many marketing, design, research and development businesses remain in Malta. Tomato processing is amongst those that have moved to Tunisia. This used to be done in Gozo. As for the Maltese clothing industry, the tailoring is done in Tunisia and design, marketing and business negotiation in Malta.

Malta is part of the globalised world even if Maltese people do not travel outside the country very much. In the tourism sector, *Corinthia* (Corinthia Group of Companies) is a big business. It has a chain of hotels and is soon to open a big hotel in London. It has already launched in Gabon, Libya, Turkey, Portugal, Czech Republic, and Hungary.



Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2008. © Hegel Goutier "If we can sell here to Maltese people and to tourists, why not in Casablanca and Prague?"



Kevin Borg 2008 © Hegel Goutier

## > Malta in the movies

The film industry is another growing area of the economy. Famous films have already been made in Malta: *Gladiators*, *Troy*, *Munich* and very soon, a big Spanish film whose title is still under wraps.

We also have cruise liner tourism. In the winter, 15 cruise ships dock every week. Some of them come in 12 months of the year. Even if they come for just one day, tourists spend money. The average tourist stays six to seven days. When it's too cold in the North, pensioners from UK or Germany stay two, three weeks, sometimes five weeks or more.

I am very optimistic about the economy. The Government can afford to lower taxes. Salaries are increasing and profits are increasing. The overall revenue from taxes has increased but the rates have decreased, from 35 per cent to 32 per cent. The Prime Minister has announced that the economy is strong enough to cut the top rate of income tax from 35 per cent to 25 per cent. And if you currently earn €12,000 a year, you don't pay any income tax. Unemployment is currently 6 per cent which is very low. This has gone down over the last five years. The government deficit has decreased as well as the national debt. All these factors opened the way for Malta to join the Euro zone. We believe that our entry

Our Chamber is encouraging our enterprises to branch out overseas. What we are saying is, if you can sell here to Maltese people and to tourists, why not in Casablanca and Prague? They have to do that. In the Chamber we have an expert to assist small and medium size business. Big concerns like *Corinthia*, are big enough to do it alone.

## > Smart City

Our country is orienting itself towards IT. *Smart City* is akin to Dubai's *Internet City*. The government has given the go ahead for it to be built here in the neighbourhood of Ricasoli. This project will create 5600 jobs for IT programmers and others. Maltese people will work there. Development of the area started six months ago. *Smart City* will be finished in five or six years. We currently have one computer for six students. In six months time we will have one computer for four students, the highest rate in the world. All classes will have web classes.

into the euro zone will allow our economy to prosper; GDP will grow and debt will go down.

## > Many jobs for foreigners

Malta has very high numbers of migrant workers. As a small country, it is not always easy to find the right skill sets. Computer specialists, for example, usually come from Europe and especially the UK. The hotel industry attracts workers from Italy and France. Building industry workers come from African and Mediterranean. Without such workers, salaries would go up and companies would be less competitive.

## > Housing

Malta has a housing problem because during the First and Second World Wars, a lot of houses were destroyed in air attacks. The government voted a law to

make it very easy to rent a house if your building had been destroyed. This law has not changed since and is very favourable for tenants. You, your children and even your children's children can stay in a house at the original rental price and the owner is responsible for all the maintenance. People still live in nice houses and pay just €100 per month. The law changed in 1994, but only for new tenants, not for previous ones. If you are an owner, you often prefer to leave the house empty. The Chamber of Commerce is lobbying the Government for a change of this law but it is hesitating. It is afraid some people might not be able to pay more. All factors have to be carefully studied before the government makes any move. ■

### Keywords

Malta; Kevin J. Borg; trade; economy; tourism; information technology.

# Boat people in Malta

For about the past five years, Malta has been confronted with the regular arrival of boat people from African countries who either land on its coastline or are intercepted by Maltese coastguards. On average, 1,500 arrive every year, many having crossed the Sahara before embarking on a flimsy craft in Libya. They are all initially housed at the Hal Far Open closed centre that has about 600 people in residence at any one time. Located close to the international airport, the camp consists of tents and offers minimal comfort at best, provoking protests from some NGOs.

Following transfer to a second open centre, those who are granted asylum face the problem of a lack of work. Despite its prosperous economy, Malta has a population of just 400,000 and is only able to offer between 1,000 and 1,500 jobs a year to foreigners. Few, if any, of these jobs are accessible to boat people. They either lack the required skills or are simply rejected, say the local media, for the very fact of being boat people. ■



Vineyard, Malta 2008. © Hegel Goutier

# MALTA

## past and present

Malta can pride itself on having the charms of a Mediterranean country and the most eclectic of European cultural heritages. It has beaches and entertainment, a flavour of the east, a Semitic language and unique collections of art. The past, which is evident everywhere, stands side-by-side with the present and promises for the future. These include the work of an architectural genius, Richard England, who is creating magic with the splendid buildings of the knights of the order.

With a total surface area of just three hundred square kilometres, including the adjacent islands of Gozo and Comino, the country's attractions can be visited within two or three days thanks to its excellent road and sea infrastructure. One way of visiting the island is to opt for the 'Red Tour' which takes a day for the south route and another for the north route.

Sights to be seen on the south route include the fortifications of the three cities of Cottonera; inspiring Valetta with its shipyards; the bright fishing village of Marsaxlokk with its colourful boats lined up in the harbour; the beautiful beaches of Bugibba, Qawra and St. Paul's Bay with their entertainment areas and the crystalline waters of the Blue Grotto. The north route features the botanical gardens of San Anton; the faded charm of the former capital, Mdina, "the silent city" with its graceful mixture of medieval and baroque architecture and the twists and turns of its backstreets; the tall cliffs of Dingli near to the Buskett Gardens with its vineyards, orangery, olives and citrus fruit plantations and the luxurious, fashionable districts of Silema and St Julians.

There are also many treasures within easy reach in the capital, Valetta. The Co-Cathedral

of St John which houses Caravaggio's 'The Decapitation of St John' is one worth taking time out to visit; the Grandmaster's Palace and many other palaces as well as wonderful terraced gardens like those at Upper Baraka.

### > Satisfying the soul

In Valetta, there is also the ancient fortress of St. James Cavalier, which has been transformed into a vibrant centre of culture and creativity by the poet, architect and philosopher Richard England, who brings real soul to the imposing defences of the Knights of Malta, allowing light and dreams to enter into the depths of the military fortifications.

His influences include the mantra of Axel Munthe: "The soul needs more room than the body."\* Indeed, England dreams of giving the whole of Valetta some of the magic of his major works which include the Martin Luther King Memorial in Washington, the Itzhak Rabin Memorial in Tel Aviv, and other major architectural projects in Moscow, Buenos Aires, Wrocław as well as private homes, churches, theatres and sanctuaries. He would like to give the city "the silence in between", as he calls it. Something he has achieved in the main lecture hall and the humanities block of the University of Malta.

When his 'Valetta master plan', is completed the whole personality of Valetta will be transformed. This is already seen in the work he has carried out at 'St James Cavalier' and the 'Central Bank of Malta', where – with almost surgical precision – he has created something new while being faithful to the existing structures. **H.G.** ■

\* in "The story of San Michele" 1929.



Midna, a charming town 2008. © Hegel Goutier



Rabat Midna 2008 © Hegel Goutier



Port of Marsaxlokk 2008 © Hegel Goutier



Carnaval 2008 in Valetta © Hegel Goutier



Carnaval 2008 in Valetta © Hegel Goutier



Blanchard Labakh, *Petit Dobakh*, Cité Verte, Kinshasa, DRC, 2007. Courtesy of Africalia

# Contemporary photography FROM THE DRC

*Congo Eza* – prints of dreams and realities

Rarely do you have the opportunity to feast your eyes on such a beautiful book of photographs featuring the work of creative people from this part of Africa. *Congo Eza* is the exception that proves the rule – although there have been others, like the special edition of *Revue Noire* in 2001 which extolled the virtues of art photography. *Congo Eza* brings together the contemporary reality of Congo, the recent war and the bustle of everyday life and the country's creativity.

The book is a collection of emotions and snapshots. Black, white and in colour. Spontaneity, dramatic composition, insolence, revolt, transgression, light-heartedness and humour: 24 photographers from diverse backgrounds. They have one thing in common: participation in one of two artistic events and training programmes organised by the Wallonia-Brussels Delegation in Kinshasa and the Foreign Relations section of the French Community of Belgium, amongst which 'Yambi', the 2007 Congolese Culture festival in Belgium. The Brussels-based AFRICALIA association decided to record

the success of their get-togethers in this high-end publication.

Linking the the different sections of the book are selected verbs in lingala which punctuate the various chapters. *Kokekola*, to learn, to bring up, to grow. The primarily black and white idealised images evoke people's desire to learn from books, in sports fields and from loved ones. Sadly, also through that most common of children's games 'playing at war', as singer and poet, Marie-Louise Bibish Mumbu's introduction to this chapter explains. Her contribution is a marvellous piece of writing. It is beautifully written, as is all the poetry that accompanies this pictorial journey through the kaleidoscope of Congolese life, its hopes and dreams.

Other verbs in Lingala: *kobouger*, a word for to move, to travel; *kolingana*, to love one another, to make love; *kobeta libanga*, to survive, to get by; *komilakisa*, to appear, to pose; *kosambela*, to pray; *kokoma*, to write, to mark, to paint. Finally, *kopana bakambi*, to choose, to vote, to elect, featured in epigraph with a tragic, yet amusing poem by the Congolese author, Fiston Nasser Mwanza.

The publication's title is taken from *Ex* reflecting:

- Ex-International Congo Association
- Ex-Upper Congo Study Committee
- Ex-Independent State of Congo
- Ex-Belgian Congo
- Ex-Democratic Republic of Congo
- Ex-Zaire
- Re-Democratic Republic of Congo
- .....
- Congo ezalaki
- Congo eza
- Congo ezakoya
- It used to be, it is there, it is coming...
- ..... (extract)

A book that is truly...How do you say 'moving' in Lingala?

*Congo Eza*, Africalia Edition & Roularta Books, Brussels 2007, 264 pages **H.G.** ■

**Keywords**

Hegel Goutier; Congo; Zaire; Eza; Africalia; photography.

Sandra Federici

# YOUNG ART from South Africa



Kendell Geers, poster realised for the exhibition .ZA - young art from South Africa, Palazzo delle Papesse in Siena, 2008.

“Is it possible to speak of South Africa without falling into the traps of cliché about race, apartheid, colonialism, class, poverty and AIDS?” asks Kendell Geers in his text for the exhibition catalogue, *.ZA - Young art from South Africa*.

This is the very challenge underscoring the exhibition produced by the Centre for

Contemporary Art Palazzo delle Papesse in Siena. As stated by director Marco Pierini, this initiative started with the purpose of “photographing” the country’s young artistic production in collaboration with more mature artists (Marlene Dumas, Kendell Geers, Bernie Searle, Minnette Vári, Sue Williamson), each of whom has been requested to choose three artists. The exhibi-

tion’s creator Lorenzo Fusi has joined them. Considering the works presented, what is clear is that the selected artists do not run the risk of following African clichés in order to be accepted or to sell abroad. This interesting *corpus* of works – though some slightly immature – is juxtaposed with the venue, which is an amazing 15th century palace of with a succession of rooms, halls and ceilings decorated with Renaissance-style paintings. The beauty of the rooms is capped by a turret which, besides offering the best 360-degree view of Siena, is the location where Galileo had his prison sentence commuted and was placed under house arrest after having relinquished the Catholic Church.

Another important element is the iconographic material that the five artist-curators have provided in order to enhance the exhibition’s image: five dynamic, hard-hitting posters covering both the walls and floor of the entrance room. This environment introduced the central performance by Johan Thom during the opening ceremony: for four hours, he endures having broken glass and yellow oil poured on top of him.

The co-curators have also written the catalogue texts to illustrate the contemporary situation of South African artists. Kendell Geers’ analysis of the country’s cultural systems is particularly poignant: “Since the fall of apartheid South Africa has been struggling to come to terms with its violent history, struggling to find a balance between building a future and addressing the imbalances of the past. [...] Instead of art being celebrated for its excellence, the work of art has been reduced to a politically correct demographic with an emphasis on traditional craft.” In essence this is an accusation against affirmative action policies that wanted to reverse relations between blacks and whites, and against which art was rebelling.

However, for white artists and writers, bridging the gap with their black counterparts often resulted in the loss of credibility and by being perceived to speak on behalf of oppressed black people. With the end of apartheid, the artists’ most serious problem has been the disappearance of a common “enemy” as well as the need to find a new purpose for their work. The young authors of .ZA, who grew up in Mandela and Mbeki’s Rainbow Nation, seem to have positively solved this problem without negative feelings towards their former enemy. The exhibition comprises artwork about South African identities and places, and highlights the unsolved struggles of this multiethnic society, while dealing with more universal themes as well. In the performance-installation, *Serenade* by Simon Gush, a local police car is



placed in the entrance of the old building. An actor, dressed in a police uniform, then sits inside the car and sings “Can’t Take my Eyes off of You” through speakers mounted on the car’s roof. It is quite strange (and disturbing) to hear a policeman sing the sweet song, “I love you baby! And if it’s quite alright, I need you, baby!”

James Webb’s *The Black Passage* is a narrow dark corridor in which the visitor walks toward the source of a rumbling sound – the descent into amine. At the end a light is the suggestion of a half-closed door, but when we arrive we find out that there is no way to go out. It is a shocking and surreal experience to go into the mine tunnel, but also evokes similar ‘no way out’, both physically and psychologically. Ismail Farouk’s videos give us an interesting representation of life in South African cities. Photographs by Zanele Mhlobo shift the focus to discrimination and identity issues from the

racial, gender and sexual perspectives. *Night Journey* by Colleen Alborough, an interactive installation: a labyrinth of veil curtains in which the spectator becomes an active part of the narrative and sensory path of the dreams and nightmares of a mysterious person sleeping.

Also, the leather figures by Nandipha Mntambo move across the wall to elicit the past. These figures are linked both to the disruptive and aggressive nature of South African animals and to the elegance of 18th century dresses.

In sum, “new South African art” is not exclusively related to apartheid anymore, though it retains strong political and social tones. The artists of .ZA perfectly illustrate the condition of intellectuals placed in a peripheral position within the new globalised world where – despite everything seeming to be near and possible – peripheries remain peripheries. ■

## The authors:

COLLEEN ALBOROUGH  
BRIDGET BAKER  
ZANDER BLOM  
DINEO BOPAPE  
ISMAIL FAROUK  
FRANCES GOODMAN  
SIMON GUSH  
NICHOLAS HLOBO  
MOSHEKWA LANGA  
NONTSIKELELO LOLO VELEKO  
CHURCHILL MADIKIDA  
NANDIPHA MNTAMBO  
ZANELE MUHOLI  
RUTH SACKS  
SEAN SLEMON  
DOREEN SOUTHWOOD  
MIKHAEL SUBOTZKY  
JOHAN THOM  
INA VAN ZYL  
JAMES WEBB

## Keywords

Sandra Federici; South Africa; .ZA; Art; Kendell Geers.

Top:  
Johan Thom, *Come in peace/Go to pieces*, Performance, 2008 photo © Ela Bialkowska - Palazzo delle Papesse

Below:  
Club de Bamako Coura. Courtesy of Alban Bausiat.

This picture is part of a photo-report on the film industry in Mali entitled ‘Cinés cassés’, published by the Belgian photo agency Contraste. Website: [www.albanbaussiat.com](http://www.albanbaussiat.com).

## Support programme to cultural industries in ACP countries

The ACP Secretariat has elaborated a programme to support cultural industries of the 79 ACP countries. The programme, managed and implemented by the ACP Secretariat and a programme management unit, is funded under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF). The programme aims at reinforcing the capacities of policy decision-makers and cultural operators through an:

- ACP Cultural Observatory to improve the policy, legal and institutional frameworks of the cultural sector in ACP Member States;
- Intra-ACP Support Fund for Culture to reinforce and professionalise ACP cultural operators;
- ACP/ILO/UNCTAD/UNESCO-joint project to strengthen the creative industries in five countries (Fiji, Mozambique, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zambia).

“This programme” is the culminating point of a process begun with the Dakar Declaration of ACP Ministers of Culture who in 2003 fixed objectives for the ACP cultural industries,” says Aya Kasasa, programme

responsible at the ACP Secretariat. “There was a great expectation between ACP operators, because information spread a lot through the ACP Cultural Festival, which was the first concrete result of Dakar Declaration. Now we are working to a semi-annual work programme that will fix the objectives and the calendar for the Fund. A call for proposals will be published in May 2008.” ■

INFO: [www.acp.int](http://www.acp.int)





Europe, Caribbean

# DANZAS DES DEUX MONDES

## Classical music in the mix

Music has been present since the worlds of Europe, Africa and the Americas first came together. Even if it did not bring joy, music was a respite from the harshness of life at that time. On their decks and in their holds, African slave ships and Europe's merchant vessels carried not only slaves, buccaneers, settlers and merchandise but also culture – in the form of songs and sad laments.



Ludovic Lamothe  
© anonymous

African influences in Caribbean art are now widely acknowledged, but European influences were just as much in the blend that would breathe into the essence of the islands and their songs and dances, romanticism, sensual melancholy and broad aspirations.

European music (especially that of Central and Eastern Europe) with its dances – waltzes, mazurkas, pas de deux – and romanticism – especially that of Central and Eastern Europe – as embodied by Brahms and Chopin, became part of the Caribbean fusion. At the turn of the 18th century in Haiti, for example, the Polish – who often unwillingly accompanied Napoleon's troops – would be the first Europeans to give their support to the emerging nation. Their presence contributed to spreading the violin and melancholic music. The influence of the violin is also found in the folk music and dances of Dominica (merengue), Cuba (guaracha), and Guadeloupe and Martinique (the zouk).

European heritage would become grounded in the roots of much of the music of Cuba as well as that of Haiti, Puerto Rico and Martinique. Among the burgeoning bourgeoisie, this classical music of Europe and its local composers came to be known as 'scholarly music' ('musique savante'). In the first decade of the 19th century it would be taught at the Milo School of Music, founded by King Christophe, in northern

Haiti and in the musical salons of Santo Domingo. Over time, this blend would become more exciting with distinctive features. You might say, more romantic, warmer, more mellow.

Such are the danzas of the Cuban Ignacio Cervantes (*Duchas frias* and three danzas) and Haitian Ludovic Lamothe (*Danses espagnoles* no. 2 in A minor, no. 3 in F minor, *Déclaration*) and works by Frank Lassègue (*Chanson du rivage* no. 3) and Alain Clérié (*Prélude*) are in the second part of the concert by Michel Laurent, which opens with pieces by Brahms (*Waltzes, Opus 3*) and Chopin (*Mazurkas, Opus, 6 no 1, Opus 67 nos. 2, 3 and 4*). Michel Laurent's fluid, graceful and passionate interpretation completely captures the sensuality of this famous repertoire. **H.G.**

Theatre Molière, Brussels, 26 April, 2000

'Danzas des deux mondes' will be organising regular concerts on the fusion between the classical music of Europe and the Caribbean. Info: [danzas2worlds@hotmail.com](mailto:danzas2worlds@hotmail.com)

**Keywords**

Hegel Goutier; Music; classic; Haiti; Cuba; Ignacio Cervantes; Ludovic Lamothe; Frank Lassègue; Alain Clérié; Michel Laurent.



Doreen Southwood, The Dancer, Bronze, enamel paint, fabric, steel, 176 x 190 x 292cm, 2007, detail. Courtesy of Michael Stevenson, Cape Town  
Photo: Mario Todeschini, ZA - young art from South Africa, Palazzo delle Papesse in Siena

T.T. Fons

## GOORGOORLOU THE FISHERMAN



Courtesy of the author

# Words from Readers

*We are interested in your point of view and your reactions to the articles. So do tell us what you think.*

Many thanks for the issues of *Courier* sent to the Lycée Evariste of Parry (Reunion Island). We are putting the articles to very good use.

*Christine Fourest*

politicians and aspiring politicians should study the articles. If they do, I think they will better be able to contribute to the overall development of their countries.

*Courtney Lafleur,*

the good layout and interesting content. It has all the potential of becoming a significant publication. Keep it up!

*Andrea Frazzetta,*  
photographer Agenzia Grazia Neri,  
Milano, Italy

It has been some years since I have had the privilege of reading the *Courier*. I think all

I have just received the last issue of *the Courier* (on Haiti and Romania). My Compliments for

**Address: The Courier - 45, Rue de Trèves 1040 Brussels (Belgium)**  
**email: info@acp-eucourier.info - website: www.acp-eucourier.info**

## Calendar

June – September 2008



Strasbourg, France is the location for the third edition of European Development Days (EDD), 15-17 November 2008.

Info: <http://eudevdays.eu/Public/index.html>

### June 2008

- > 13-15 FAO High level conference on world food security and the challenges of climate change and bio-energy, Rome, Italy
- > 17-18 WHO TRIPS Council in Geneva
- > 8-13 87th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- > 8-13 33rd Session of the ACP – EC Council of Ministers, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- > 25-27 3rd ACP Civil Society Forum, Brussels, Belgium
- > 26-1 African Union Summit, Sharm el Sheik, Egypt
- > 30-2 CARIFORUM – EU Business Summit and Business Forum, Trinidad

### July

- > 2-5 Twenty-ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government, Antigua and Barbuda
- > 12 CARICOM-Spain Summit, Zaragoza, Spain
- > 15-16 CRNM Trade Negotiations Bootcamp, Haiti
- > 16-18 ACP-UN Habitat Meeting, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- > 17-18 WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements in Geneva
- > 23-25 WTO Trade Policy Review, Barbados
- > 29-30 WTO General Council in Geneva
- CARICOM – Canada Summit, in Ottawa (date to be decided)

### August

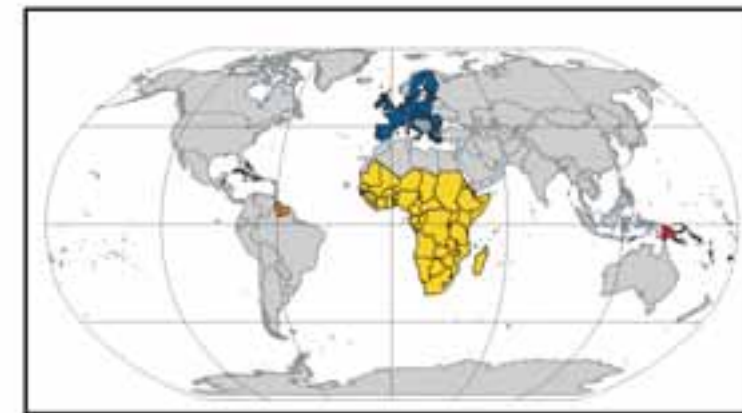
- > 19-21 Annual Pacific Forum Meeting, Niue (to be confirmed)

### September

- > 12-13 Forum for Media and Development, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- > 23-25 UN – Africa's development needs, New York, USA

*CARICOM: Caribbean Community (15 Member States)*  
*CARIFORUM: The forum of the Caribbean ACP States*  
*CRNM: Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery*  
*EU-LAC: European Union-Latin America & Caribbean*  
*WTO: World Trade Organisation*

## Africa – Caribbean – Pacific and European Union countries



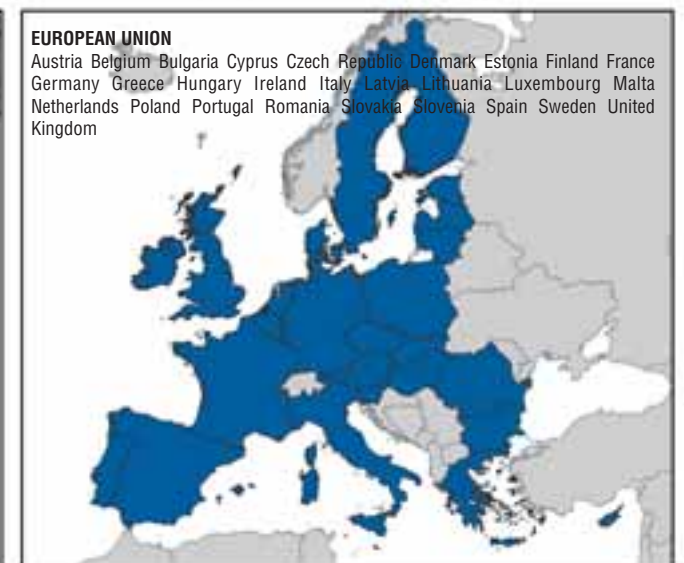
**CARIBBEAN**  
Antigua and Barbuda The Bahamas Barbados Belize Cuba Dominica Dominican Republic Grenada Guyana Haiti Jamaica Saint Kitts and Nevis Saint Lucia Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Suriname Trinidad and Tobago



**PACIFIC**  
Cook Islands Federated States of Micronesia Fiji Kiribati Marshall Islands Nauru Niue Palau Papua New Guinea Samoa Solomon Islands Timor Leste Tonga Tuvalu Vanuatu



**AFRICA**  
Angola Benin Botswana Burkina Faso Burundi Cameroon Cape Verde Central African Republic Chad Comoros Congo (Rep. of) Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Republic of the Congo Djibouti Equatorial Guinea Eritrea Ethiopia Gabon Gambia Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Kenya Lesotho Liberia Madagascar Malawi Mali Mauritania Mauritius Mozambique Namibia Niger Nigeria Rwanda Sao Tome and Principe Senegal Seychelles Sierra Leone Somalia South Africa Sudan Swaziland Tanzania Togo Uganda Zambia Zimbabwe



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
Austria Belgium Bulgaria Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland France Germany Greece Hungary Ireland Italy Latvia Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Netherlands Poland Portugal Romania Slovakia Slovenia Spain Sweden United Kingdom

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